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REVIEW

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Cover photograph by Robert Frank

Contributors:

ARTHUR ADAMOV is best known for his play *Ping-Pong*. *Paolo Paoli*, his most recent work, was produced in France last year.

PAUL BLACKBURN has returned to New York where he is completing his translations from Provençal.

ROBIN BLASER lives in Boston and is on the staff of the Widener Library.

CHARLES FOSTER has settled in California, where he has joined the Venice West group of writers.

JOHN HICKEY is a sophomore English major at Rollins College. "Break Your Mother's Back" is his first published story.

JACK KEROUAC's "Seattle Burlesque" is taken from his unpublished novel *Desolation Angels*.

JOHN LOGAN's first volume of poems, *Cycle for Mother Cabrini*, was published in 1955.

CHARLES OLSON has returned to Gloucester, where he is continuing work on his *Maximus* poems. His study of Melville, *Call Me Ishmael*, was recently republished by Grove Press.

WILL PETERSEN is an American painter-printmaker teaching in Japan. An earlier version of "Stone Garden" was published in *Berkeley Bussei* (1956), annual publication of the Berkeley Young Buddhists Association.

ALEXANDER TROCCHI was editor of *Merlin* (1952-1955). We print here a section from his work-in-progress.

CHARLES OLSON: The Lordly and Isolate Satyrs

The lordly and isolate Satyrs—look at them come in
on the left side of the beach
like a motorcycle club! And the handsomest of them,
the one who has a woman, driving that snazzy
convertible
Wow, did you ever see even in a museum
such a collection of boddisatvahs, the way
they come up to their stop, each of them
as though it was a rudder
the way they have to sit above it
and come to a stop on it, the monumental solidity
of themselves, the Easter Island
they make of the beach, the Red-headed Men

These are the Androgynes,
the Fathers behind the father, the Great Halves

Or as that one was, inside his pants, the Yiddish poet
a vegetarian. Or another—all in his mouth—a snarl
of the Sources. Or the one I loved most, who once,
once only, let go the pain, the night he got drunk,
and I put him to bed, and he said, Bad blood.

Or the one who cracks and doesn't know
that what he thinks are a thousand questions are suddenly
a thousand lumps thrown up where the cloaca
again has burst: one looks into the face and exactly as suddenly
it isn't the large eyes and nose but the ridiculously small mouth
which you are looking down as one end of

—as the Snarled Man

is a monocyte

Hail the ambiguous Fathers, and look closely
at them, they are the unadmitted, the club of Themselves,
weary riders, but who sit upon the landscape as the Great
Stones. And only have fun among themselves. They are
the lonely ones

Hail them, and watch out. The rest of us,
on the beach as have previously known it, did not know
there was this left side. As they came riding in from the sea
—we did not notice them until they were already creating
the beach we had not known was there—but we assume
they came in from the sea. We assume that. We don't know.

In any case the whole sea was now a hemisphere,
and our eyes like half a fly's, we saw twice as much. Every-
thing opened, even if the newcomers just sat, didn't,
for an instant, pay us any attention. We were as we had been,
in that respect. We were usual, the children were being fed pop
and potato chips, and everyone was sprawled as people are
on a beach. Something had happened but the change
wasn't at all evident. A few drops of rain
would have made more of a disturbance.

There we were. They, in occupation of the whole view
in front of us and off to the left where we were not used to look.
And we, watching them pant from their exertions, and talk to each o
the one in the convertible the only one who seemed to be circulatin
And he was dressed in magnificent clothes, and the woman with hi
a dazzling blond, the new dye making her hair a delicious
streaked ash. She was as distant as the others. She sat in her flesh to

These are our counterparts, the unknown ones.

They are here. We do not look upon them as invaders. Dimensional
they are larger than we—all but the woman. But we are not sudden
small. We are as we are. We don't even move, on the beach.

It is a stasis. Across nothing at all we stare at them. We can see what they are. They don't notice us. They have merely and suddenly moved in. They occupy our view. They are between us and the ocean. And they have given us a whole new half of beach.

As of this moment, there is nothing else to report. It is Easter Island transplanted to us. With the sun, and a warm summer day, and sails out on the harbor they're here, the Contemporaries. They have come in.

Except for the stirring of the leader, they are still catching their breath. They are almost like scooters the way they sit there, up a little, on their thing. It is as though the extra effort of it tired them the most. Yet that just there was where their weight and separateness—their immensities—lay. Why they seem like boddisatvahs. The only thing one noticed is the way their face breaks when they call across to each other. Or actually speak quite quietly, not wasting breath. But the face loses all containment, they are fifteen year old boys at the moment they speak to each other. They are not gods. They are not even stone. They are doubles. They are only Source. When they act like us they go to pieces. One notices then that their skin is only creased like red-neck farmers. And that they are all freckled. The red-headed people have the hardest time to possess themselves. Is it because they were over-fired? Or why—even to their beautiful women—do the red ones have only that half of the weight?

We look at them, and begin to know. We begin to see who they are. We see why they are satyrs, and why one half of the beach was unknown to us. And now that it is known, now that the beach goes all the way to the headland we thought we were huddling ourselves up against, it turns out it is the same. It is beach. These Visitors—Resters—who, by being there, made manifest what we had not known—that the beach fronted wholly to the sea—have only done that, completed the beach.

The difference is we are more on it. The beauty of the white of the sun's light, the blue the water is, and the sky, the movement of the painted landscape, the boy-town the scene was, is now pierced with angels and with fire. And winter's ice shall be as brilliant in its time as life truly is, as Nature is only the offerer, and it is we who look to see what the beauty is.

These-visitors, now stirring to advance, to go on wherever they do go restlessly never completing their tour, going off on their motorcycles, each alone except for the handsome one, isolate huge creatures wearing down nothing as they go, their huge third leg like carborundum, only the vault of their being taking rest, the awkward boddhas

We stay. And watch gather themselves up. We have no feeling except love. They are not ours. They are of another name. These are what the gods are. They look like us. They are only in all parts larger. But the size is only different. The difference is, they are not here, they are not on this beach in this sun which, tomorrow, when we come to swim, will be another summer day. They can't talk to us. We have no desire to stop them any more than, as they made their camp, only possibly the woman in the convertible one might have wanted to be familiar with. The Leader was too much as they.

They go. And the day

Accusing. Two orange eyes set in dead white, staring up at him, accusing. And a rising curl of gray smoke past his eyes.

There was a tinkle of shells and a waft of air. Gray smoke eddied toward his face, rose up his nostrils. His nose twitched.

He sneezed. "Scope," he said.

His eyes blinked four times, rapidly.

He wiped his nose on the sleeve of his shirt and looked down at the counter that was tilting up toward him or away from him—which was it? And now he knew what the orange eyes were. Eggs. Sunnyside up. Hash-brown potatoes on the side. And coffee now, please, miss.

"Yes sir," she said, "right away, sir."

Had he said it out loud? And had he said it just now—or was he remembering having said it when he walked into this place, out of the awful rain? But she had already turned away, toward the terrace of six silexes in back of the counter.

She had short legs. Like goat legs? No. They were straight and rounded—not crooked or bony. But her trunk long in proportion. Erect she stood and walked. Rhythmic. Backstrap of her bra through the translucent nylon dimpled waitress dress going this way and that way as her shoulders went this way and that way.

Not slender, she wasn't. Young. Already too soft-rounded to be slender. And later on not slender at all. With love and children and food she'd spread. But with love. Black hair and skin in desert colors. Hints of ocher and sand and brown in the flesh. Desert Princess.

And brown eyes. Liquid brown. Not orange. Not accusing orange eyes idiot-set in frizzled mires of dead white with airholes.

He sneezed again.

He looked down. His right hand was resting on the edge

of the counter, the counter that kept sloping this way and that way. Loving counter, nubile and waiting counter.

He saw the long thin cigar in his hand. That was the smoke. It had a soft gray ash three-quarters of an inch long and the smoke curled whitely toward his face. The firm brown wrapper of the slender cigar was faintly green in places.

"Seventy-five cents," he said.

"Did you say something to me, sir?" The girl turned back to him.

"Seventy-five cents, Desert Princess," he said. "Somewhere for this Havana Panatela . . . Havana Panatela . . . I paid seventy-five cents."

"Of course," Desert Princess said. "You got it here."

She was close to him, just above him across the yawing, shifting counter. Hips, waist, breasts, shoulders, liquid warm brown eyes and the clean smell of herself. How could anybody smell so much like herself?

"You bought it here, sir," she said with a smile hinting at the full flesh of her lips. "You said it might protect you from the rain. You bought it and then you lit it and you went out."

"I did? Nonchalant, into the red rain, smoking a seventy-five cent Havana Panatela. Devil a care . . . never a backward glance . . . leaving you flat? How could I do it, Desert Princess?"

"Oh, I didn't worry, sir. Your friend worried but I didn't worry. I knew you'd be back. At least, I was pretty sure you'd be back. And now you are back, aren't you?"

"Am I?" he said. "Yes, I suppose I am. And with a seventy-five cent Havana Panatela. But we'll soon fix that."

He grasped the panatela like a spear between the thumb and first two fingers of his right hand. So poised, he waited for the yaw and pitch of the counter to settle a little. And then he plunged it down, swiftly hard and true, down right into the center of the first of the two orange accusing eyes.

Liquid yolk spurted.

There was another musical tinkle of shells. He looked up and back along the deep, narrow lunchroom. The writhing counter ended four stools farther down—and there was an archway, ornate with plaster angels and lilies growing at its curving edges. Had he made it? He supposed so. And down from the arch hung a curtain made of shells. Shells that tinkled as, blown by air, they sounded one against another.

And now the shells had parted. And two brown hands were on the edges of the arch.

The Watusi Chief.

Six feet four inches tall he was. Maybe taller when he straightened up? But now he stooped under the arch.

"You shouldn't oughta done that, Boss," Watusi Chief said.

"Why not?" the man called Boss asked.

"Nobody oughta waste food, Boss. It ain't right, with people hungry."

"You call *this* food? And you call *them* out there people? I'll show you what's food and what's people!"

Boss lifted the dripping end of the Havana Panatela out of the egg yolk, leaving a mound of ash, gray slowly wetting to black. "I'll show you!"

And he plunged the end of the Havana Panatela deep into the center of the second orange eye. Again, liquid yolk spurted. It splashed on the heaving counter, the nylon of Desert Princess, the dirty, red-spattered khaki of the Boss's shirt.

"I'll show you what's food, you black bastard! I'll show you what's people! I'll show you what's what!"

Calmly, Watusi Chief took two big steps along the billowing counter. His long, evenly muscled right arm snaked down and under Boss's arms and around his belly. He lifted and hauled Boss up into the air, up over the counter. Desperately, Boss reached down to retrieve his Havana Panatela from the middle of the second orange eye. But his fingers only brushed it, knocking it off the edge of the plate onto the pulsing counter.

The counter surged and Havana Panatela flipped up on the

crest of the surge and then off the counter and down, down between two stools.

Boss screamed in mid-air. "Something to suck. Gotta have something to suck. Something to mouth!" Boss screamed and screamed again.

"Maybe you better give him some mints," Desert Princess said.

"Could be," Watusi Chief said. "Gimme a box of 'em, please."

Desert Princess walked along the counter to the cash register, up at the front of the long narrow room.

Watusi Chief hoisted Boss up to his shoulder and let him hang there. "You try to calm down, Boss," he said. "You suck some mints and calm down, okay? Because we've got to find us a job before we run into the Town Marshal again—you remember, the bastard who stopped us out on the highway this morning?"

But Boss wasn't listening. Because down there in front of him was Desert Princess, one hand on the cash register, smiling up at him.

"Honey," he wailed to her, over the vast distances between them, the tremendous distances between everybody, "desert honey. Desert honey in the cool light and shadow of the oasis where the wild bees murmur. I must go now, I must leave thee, O desert princess of my honeycomb, dripping with desert ardor. I am borne on cruel wings of duty—but the memory of your sweet honey will stay ever on my tongue. Loved I not honor more, I'd curry and hurry the spice of your honey'd favor, and here I'd make my stand, to love or die for honey . . ."

"How much do we owe ya?" Watusi Chief asked.

"One eighty-seven," Desert Princess said. "Including the Havana Panatela and the sales tax."

Watusi Chief pulled two bills and a coin out of his pants pocket. "Here you are, miss. And you keep the change for your trouble."

"Oh, it wasn't hardly what you'd call trouble at all," Desert Princess said, smiling. "Why, gee, I kind of like him. The nice things he said, even if he did splash egg on my dress. I really do."

Boss began chanting, in a high falsetto. "Mints, mints, mints—mints pie in the mints sky when I mints mints mints die. Hot slices and slabs of mints sky girl princess of minks and princess of mints, succulent mints and singing minks. And when the mints sky was opened they all rained down—the shining furs of mints, the running laughter of the minks. And all the kings began to sing, O what a princess dish to set before the minsky pie of my mint-deminted eye . . ."

"Here's your mints, Boss. You can simmer down, now."

Boss saw the pink palm of Watusi Chief's brown left hand coming up toward his mouth. Two round white mints in the palm. Boss craned down, mouth open, tongue out. He lapped up and sucked up the two mints. And then he twisted his neck up and around till he could see the ceiling.

"Well, miss, I guess we'll be running along now," Watusi Chief said. "Could you tell me how we get to the state employment office from here?"

"Why, surely," Desert Princess said. "You just cross Main at the next crossing—the one with the light. That's Second. Walk two blocks down and turn left on Elm. Employment office's in the middle of the block. You can't miss it."

Desert Princess looked up at Boss, on Watusi Chief's shoulder. And then, beyond him, she saw what was happening on the ceiling. Or in the ceiling. She gasped.

There was a dwarf apple tree. Not exactly painted on—or in—the ceiling. It was in bas-relief, half in and half out, as if the ceiling were wet cement and a real apple tree had been picked up by a giant hand and pushed on its side halfway into the cement. Except instead of cement, or ceiling, there was a yellow sky behind—or above—the tree.

Desert Princess felt sure—if she could only reach up that high—she could pick one of the apples and bite into it and

it would be a real apple. A tremendously real apple. Suddenly, she wanted one of the apples very much.

And she wanted the blossoms, the gigantic white-and-gold apple blossoms that nestled in sets of three around each of the big round red ripe apples. Whoever heard of apple blossoms and ripe apples growing together? And never on any tree, either apples or blossoms like these.

But instead of reaching up she just stared, mouth open. Because on the gnarled and crooked lowest limb of the dwarf apple tree a girl was suddenly sitting.

Bare feet and bare legs dangled down from the low limb, almost touching the ground. But the girl's body was wrapped in a short cape. Desert Princess had never in her life seen a cape anything like that cape but she was immediately sure that she had to have one just like it. For when she stared at it, all she could think of was a fan coral with delicate tracery veins of blood, taken from the turquoise deeps of a warm and liquid tropic sea, carried up and up to the surface of the world of air, and there transformed to texture sheer and smooth as incredible silk, silk passed by gentle hands through an adhering cloud of dust of butterfly wings.

"At it again," Watusi Chief groaned. "Jesus Christ, Boss, don't you *ever* relax?"

But Desert Princess hardly heard Watusi Chief. Because now she saw the face of the girl. And it was her face. Duplicated exactly in every detail, right down to the almost imperceptible forceps mark on her left cheek bone. But somehow, through the perfection of the likeness, there glowed a beauty, both ethereal and sexy, that Desert Princess had never herself discerned when she looked into her mirror.

"Gee," Desert Princess said, "am I *really* like that?"

"Boss says so, why then it's *so*," Watusi Chief said. "But he's sure takin' a long time saying it."

"Was I really like that—before? Or—did he, just now—did he just now *make* me that way?"

Watusi Chief sighed, resigned. "The Boss only brings out what's really there all the time, miss. He knows it's there because he can see it. And then he makes you see it too—with words, or colors, or sounds—or little scenes like this . . ."

"Goddamnit," Boss said, "I wanna nother mint. Gotta have something to *suck*!"

As Watusi Chief handed another mint up to Boss, Desert Princess saw a new figure appearing on the ceiling. Was it what they called a 'centaur'? It had four legs—but they sure weren't horse legs. They looked more like the legs of a goat. And instead of hide—horsehide or goathide—the body was covered with the finest of white feathers. Pure white, except around the brisket. There they were tipped with scarlet. And above the brisket a man's body—covered with a swirling cape of feathers. A cape cut along the same lines as the cape of Desert-Princess-in-the-apple-tree.

The head above the cape was the head of Boss—except that the single twisted spear of a unicorn horn grew out of the middle of the forehead, just below the wind-tangled hair.

Two massively muscled arms held a shiny clarinet to the lips. And goat-legged, horned, feathered and caped, Boss galloped across the ceiling toward Desert Princess on the apple tree, his head thrown far back, blowing joy into the clarinet. The sound he made filled the lunchroom.

That sound—it seemed to well up from the floor, to travel up from the toes along the quivers of nets of nerves of legs and body, to be heard by all the body, bone and flesh and glands and nerves, before it even reached the drums of the ears. Because who could ever *hear* such sounds without feeling them first?

"Hey, that's something new you got on that clarinet, ain't it, Boss" Watusi Chief said. "What is it, chrome?"

"Purest silver," Boss said. "Silver pillaged by marauding barbarian hordes of the sun as they struck down in rapine the long-forgotten mountain fastness of an ancient race, an ancient people."

"Christmas sakes!" Desert Princess breathed, "a pure silver clarinet!"

"Nah," Boss said. "I was exaggerating. Kind of a pure silver alloy. I sort of threw in a little tungsten and platinum and antimony to, well, to give it body and feel and weight and touch and resonance and timbre. Stuff like that. Gimme another mint." Boss seemed calmer now, absorbed in his work.

Desert Princess herself handed up two more mints to Boss and his lips brushed across her fingers as he took them. She looked up and saw that now her cape was opening, opening wider as Boss the centaur approached closer and closer.

But it was not really a cape at all. It was a pair of wings! They fluttered up and down, opened wide and up and out over her shoulders and back, then down, closing in and around her bare shoulders. Up and down, with a movement like the flutter of a cape and the beat of wings at the same time—keeping the beat and the time of the sound from the silver and platinum and tungsten and antimony clarinet, swooping up and down.

Under her wings, Desert Princess' arms were folded over her naked breasts. In her hands she held a short bow and an arrow, both blood red. The feathers of the arrow with their scarlet tips might have been plucked from the centaur's chest.

With the centaur galloping closer across the ceiling, Desert Princess unfolded her arms. She fitted a blood red arrow to the gold string of the blood red bow. She pulled back till the bow bent and strained in a tense arc. Bowstring taut as a song, nipples of her bare breasts taut as the bowstring, taut as the red skin of the apples, taut apples bursting with ripeness.

She released the string and the arrow sang higher than the clarinet.

But in the midflight instant, they sang together—the arrow and the clarinet. Their songs blended into one new sound. And then both stopped. Stopped in shattering silence.

"Judas Priest! What have I done now!" Desert Princess

screamed. She covered her eyes and leaned forward, bending over the cash register. "Oh, I can't bear it. I can't bear to look."

"Go ahead and look," Watusi Chief said. "You didn't do no harm. Boss is having too good a time right now to let anything tragic happen."

Desert Princess peered up, between her fingers. Watusi Chief was right. Now the silver and tungsten and antimony and platinum clarinet was clenched in Boss's right hand. And the blood red arrow he had caught, caught in midflight and at the midpoint of its shaft, between his teeth.

Boss trotted forward, lifting his goat legs high, prancing triumphantly. The golden point of the blood red arrow glinted at the sun while his eyes, under the single unicorn horn, glinted at Desert Princess . . .

"Sque-e-e-e-ak—BANG!" said the screen door.

"What the hell is going on here?" said the fat man who came in through the door.

"Why nothin' at all, Uncle," Desert Princess said. "Fellers, this is my uncle, the Town Marshal."

"We've met," Watusi Chief said.

"What d'ya mean—nothin' at all? If it's nothin' at all, then what's that tree doin' growin' outa my ceiling?"

"Your ceiling?" Watusi Chief said. "Looks to me like it's mostly Boss's ceiling now."

"Fifty-one percent of the stock in this here lunchroom's mine," the Town Marshal said. "I guess that makes it my ceiling, don't it? Well, don't it?"

"But forty-nine percent is *mine*," Desert Princess said, "so I guess I got *some* say in what . . ." Desert Princess broke off, her voice choked with disappointment. She was staring at the ceiling.

The Town Marshal looked up. The ceiling, one hundred percent of it, was just as it had always been. The plaster wore the dead gray, powdery gray coat of dirt and calcimine it

had always worn. The three big brown stains and the five small brown stains were back, where they had always been. Over the stove and grill, behind the counter, the same layer of smoke and slimy grease spread out in its half-circle, just as it had for years and years and years.

"Now look what you've gone and done!" Desert Princess screamed. "Just *look* what you've done!"

"Now *you* look, girl," the Town Marshal said. "You look and you listen to me. I'm a lot more to you than just the fifty-one percent controlling co-owner of this here lunchroom. I'm your uncle, girl, and don't you forget it. And I raised you up from the time you was a three-years-old orphan. And even besides all that—me bein' the law here—it's up to me to keep a little order . . ."

"Order!" she said scornfully, "what do you know about order?" She gazed wistfully for a moment at Boss, still hanging over the shoulder of Watusi Chief. When she spoke again her voice was softer. "Nobody ever made me like that before. Why, for a minute there, I knew the way I really was. The way I really am . . ."

"Trouble!" the Town Marshal broke in. "Trouble. From the moment I laid eyes on you two out on the highway this morning, I could smell trouble." The anger was rising in the Town Marshal's voice, the red flush working itself up into his face. "Didn't I tell you two to keep moving? Didn't I? Didn't I tell you two to keep agoin' right through my town, and not to stop for nothin'?"

Boss said, "Scope." Then he said, "You got seventy-five cents left, Watusi Chief?"

"Scope? What's he mean by scope?" the Town Marshal demanded.

"With the exception of seven cents, Boss," Watusi Chief said, "we're broke."

"I'll bet I know what he wants," Desert Princess said, "Another Havana Panatela."

"I guess so," Watusi Chief said. "When things get bad, mints just ain't enough."

"I asked you what you meant by *scope*," the Town Marshal shouted, "and by God I want an answer!"

"Before you start talkin' that way, uncle, maybe you ought to kind of remember that I'm a Sunday school teacher," Desert Princess said. "What would my class think, do you think, if they heard my own uncle a talkin' like that?"

"Maybe so," the Town Marshal said, breathing hard, "and maybe *you* ought to remember it too—that you're a Sunday school teacher—when you're having all these dirty pictures made on your ceiling. My ceiling." He paused and looked up at Boss. "But I still ain't found out what you mean by . . ."

"There's no call at all to look at him with them mean, accusing eyes of yours . . ."

"I wasn't doing anything of the sort," the Town Marshal said, "I was just trying to find out . . ."

"And what's more," Desert Princess said, "I'm going to *give* him a Havana Panatela, even if it is fifty-one percent yours. After what he showed me about myself, why it's little enough to do."

The Town Marshal stared at her in silence for a moment. When he spoke his voice was lower, placating. "Honey," he said, "you don't know what you're saying. I raised you up and I loved you and took care of you all these years. I slaved and sacrificed for you so you'd have all the advantages. I even took this here thankless Town Marshal's job, to make the money so's you could have a nice little business of your own and a place where you could meet nice young fellers. And now, after all that, you stand up there, defying me, mocking me like a jaybird. And for what? For a good for nothing, no good at all *stranger*. A *maker*. That you never even laid eyes on before . . ."

He paused for breath. Desert Princess was staring down at

her feet and there was a blush of guilt on her face.

"I guess," she said, "I guess what you say—well—I guess you're right." Her voice was small, subdued.

"You *guess* I'm right?" the Town Marshal said, louder now and with more of his old confidence. "You *know* I'm right. What I said to you, why, it's just plain common-sense facts. And there's no disputin' facts, is there, honey?"

"No," she said, her voice even smaller and quieter, "I guess not."

"Boss is gonna get kinda disturbed if he don't get a Havana Panatela pretty soon," Watusi Chief said.

"Oh, he *is*, is he?" the Town Marshal said. "Well, goddam. That just about does it. First thing, you two come into my town, without even a by-your-leave. Then, you try to turn the head of my own niece, the little girl I raised up from a baby —as good a girl as you could ask for—teaches in the Sunday school every Sunday. Next, you grow trees in the ceiling of my lunchroom. And now—to top it all off—you go 'round demandin' Havana Panatelas. Okay. Now I'll tell you what I'm goin' to do. I'm gonna run you both in. Let's go!"

"You mind telling me what the charge is?" Watusi Chief asked.

"Charge? I'll give you plenty of charges. Vagrancy . . ."

"They still got seven cents!" Desert Princess said. "It ain't as if they was broke!"

". . . And vagrancy's only the beginning," the Town Marshal went on. "Apple trees in the ceiling without a permit. Pornography. Disturbance of the peace—why, what do you think the other folks in this town would think? Supposing they was to come into this respectable lunchroom and see a apple tree growing out of the ceiling?"

"But, Uncle!" Desert Princess said, "these boys ain't bums. They're willing to work. Why, just before you came in here and made such a ruckus, they was on their way to the state employment office. And I'll bet they was goin' there to get jobs!"

"Boss ain't gonna be in a good mood *at* all if he don't get a Havana Panatela pretty quick," Watusi Chief said.

"He sure *ain't* gonna be in a good mood, where I'm taking him," the Town Marshal said, "and neither are you. Lessen you like bars, chilled steel bars. And you're gonna stay right there behind 'em, too—till the judge gets back from deer hunting."

"Bars ain't so bad," Watusi Chief said, "not when Boss gets through with 'em."

"Oh—maybe you think my bars won't hold you, huh? Chilled steel . . ."

"Oh yeah, they'll *hold* all right. Boss he got a lot of respect for reality, including bars. I don't think he's about to bust out through 'em. But he'll kind of decorate 'em—so you'll be able to see what they *really* look like—what they *feel* like. And then maybe you won't be able to stand the sight of 'em yourself . . ."

"Oh, bars, bars, *bars*!" Desert Princess said. Why can't you men ever talk sense? Chilled steel! I never heard so much nonsense in all my life. Bars or no bars, Uncle, you just can't lock these men up when they're honestly looking for work. You just can't! It ain't fair!"

"I can't, huh? What makes you think I can't?" The Town Marshal's face was livid now and he was shouting. "I'll show you what I can do and what I can't do."

"You can't lock 'em up," Desert Princess said, calmly, quietly, positively, "not if you expect to get any peace at home for the next month or two of Sundays."

The Town Marshal stared at her. "After all I've done, after all I've said, you're still taking up for these strangers . . ."

"Fair's fair!" Desert Princess said, "and it was you taught me to be fair!"

"Okay. *Okay*. I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll escort these two around to the state employment office myself. Right now. If they get themselves jobs, I'm all done with them. But if they

don't, I'm locking 'em both up!"

"Unless he gets a Havana Panatela, Boss is gonna feel . . ."

"Boss can damn well *earn* his Havana Panatela," the Town Marshal broke in, "provided he gets a job. And if you ask me, that's a pretty big provided."

The skinny man with the straw-colored hair toyed nervously with the painted wedge on his desk that said INTERVIEWER. His worried eyes shifted from the two men seated beside his desk to the fat Town Marshal standing behind both of them.

It was pretty obvious the Town Marshal didn't want these two to get jobs—but the Interviewer was determined not to let that sway him. It was up to him to match men to jobs, come hell or high water. That was *his* job and he took pride in doing it well. Of course, it was a small town and a man had to live with his neighbors. And he did owe the Marshal a few favors. And the Marshal did have one of the prettiest girls in town for a niece . . .

But naturally, he wasn't going to be influenced by any of these considerations. If there had been a job for these two—the maker and his assistant—he wouldn't hesitate a minute. But of course, in a town like this, there just weren't any jobs for makers.

"I sure wish I *did* have something in your line," he said, his voice trembling a little with sincerity, "but the honest truth of the matter is that we haven't had a call for a maker in all the three years I've been holding down this desk."

"Scope," Boss said. His moist eyes blinked as he stared at the plain, blank, ivory-colored wall at the back of the state employment office. His voice was indistinct because of the five mints he was sucking.

"What in hell do you mean by *scope*?" roared the Town Marshal.

"Don't let it excite you, Marshal," the Interviewer said hastily. "Makers often say things that seem—uh—a little obscure to folks." He turned to the two seated men. "Isn't there

—uh—something else you could do? Short order cooking? Certified Public Accounting?"

"He's tried 'em," Watusi Chief said, "but his mind sort of wanders. And then he'll put bacon fat into the coffee or coffee into the frying pan. Or he'll use the wrong set of books to make out the income tax forms. Things like that. And I've got to work with him to kind of watch out for him."

"Scope," Boss said. He was still staring at the back wall and it was beginning to shimmer a little now and didn't look quite so ivory as it had a moment before.

"I'll *scope* you when I get you locked up, the Town Marshal said. And it's time we were going right now. You heard what the man said, didn't you? He ain't got a thing for you!"

And then the Interviewer's phone rang.

He smiled and talked into the phone and listened and when he put it down he looked like a man who's just squared a circle or filled an inside straight.

"That was your niece," he said to the Town Marshal. "Says she needs a maker and maker's assistant. Right away."

"What the hell do you mean!" the Town Marshal said. "Without my say-so she can't hire any . . ."

"O Desert Princess," said the Boss, "O wild heart of desert honey. Golden goddess of Havana Panatelas . . ."

"Shut up, you! I'm the controlling co-owner of that lunchroom . . ."

"It isn't for the lunchroom," the Interviewer said. "It's for the Sunday school. Remember, way back last fall, when the Sunday School Board voted fifty dollars for an Audio Visual Training Aid? Well, she's scouted around and never found anything decent for that price. But she thought, maybe, now with a maker right here in town and all . . ."

"Fifty bucks," Watusi Chief said, "will buy one hell of a mess of Havana Panatelas. We'll take it."

"What do you mean—*we'll* take it?" the Town Marshal demanded. Who the hell asked you?"

"I got his power of attorney," said Watusi Chief. "Want I should show it to you?"

"Nah. Nah. Never mind. But I'll tell you one thing. You'd better deliver the goods, because every one of those charges is still hanging over both your heads. I'm giving you till Sunday to get this Audio Visual thing done and done right!"

"But that's only a third the usual time for a job like this," Watusi Chief said. "Think you can handle it, Boss?"

"Scope," Boss said.

"Where's the man responsible for this?" the Mayor asked as he strode up to Watusi Chief and the Town Marshal. It was Sunday morning. The mayor had just finished his dedication speech for the new Audio Visual Aid.

"That's him, out there." Watusi Chief pointed out through the Sunday school window.

For a moment, the Mayor continued to stare in wonder at the enormous Audio Visual Aid which filled the air of the Sunday school, hanging over the class that Desert Princess was now teaching. Then the Mayor looked out the window. The Boss was stretched out on the grass, flat on his back, eyes closed, a box of Havana Panatelas for a pillow. One of the cigars was lit and between his teeth. He was blowing pink smoke rings. Sometimes he would blow a green figure eight. Once in awhile a dancing girl, all colors.

"Looks kinda beat, don't he?" the Town Marshal said.

"It takes it out of a man, making as big an Audio Visual Aid as that with such a close deadline," Watusi Chief said. "And when a maker gets through working, he's put so much of himself into what he's done that there just ain't very much left over."

"Well, he's certainly made something that'll boost this town," the Mayor said. "Tourist business alone that it'll bring in—just that alone oughta pay off the bonded debt in two-three years. This sure was a damn fine idea of yours, Marshal."

"Hell, Mr. Mayor, it was mainly just using a little persuasion at the right moment," the Town Marshal said.

The man on the grass stirred. In a lazy circle, one hand swung up and took the cigar from his mouth. Gently, with the other hand, he thumbed his nose at the Marshal and the Mayor. He winked at Watusi Chief. Then he turned his face back up to the sky. He smiled wearily, happily. "Scope," he said.

Sunday school was over but the Smallest Girl was still there, staring in wonder—the stars in her eyes as bright as the millions and tens of millions of stars that shone out of the Audio Visual Aid, above and all around her.

At random, she picked out one, a medium-sized yellow star with nine tiny dots revolving around it. Pointing to it, she turned toward Desert Princess.

"Do you really think there are people like us on this one?"

"Sure," Desert Princess said with a smile. "Audio Visual Aids can't exist without people, any more than you can rightly say that people can exist without Audio Visual Aids. Leastways, that's what the Boss said. And seein' how he's the maker, I guess he knows."

"Do you think they're as good as us? Or better? Or worse?"

"From what Boss says, I'm afraid they're just about as bad. He told me he figured they'd have just as much trouble with money and cheating and bombs and plain ignorance and fancy cussedness as us."

"But why couldn't he make 'em *better,* while he was at it?"

"Well—they're supposed to be a kind of model for us and of us. And if they're too much better, then they ain't no model at all, is they? And besides, Boss says he can only make 'em as good as his own vision is good. And I guess it sounds kind of funny, but he says his vision was none too good when he made this one, on account of he didn't have no Havana Panatelas to keep him calm."

"But why didn't he, if that was all he needed?" the Smallest Girl asked.

"Folks was a little stiff-necked, I guess, child. And you know what? Boss says he figures something like that was what happened when *we* was made. Any time, he says, that a maker gets a real big job, why, it just doesn't seem as if things are set up so he'll be in a peaceful mood. Or he'll have a close deadline to meet. All kinds of things."

"Gee, you talked to him a whole *lot*," the Smallest Girl said. "Are you going to get yourself married up to him?"

"No, course not. It's been wonderful knowing him—and someday when you're big you'll know *how* wonderful. But makers just ain't very good husband material. I'll always remember him, though, I always will. Because it was him showed me who I really am. And that's the most important thing can happen to anybody ever. Even after I'm married to the Interviewer—and it isn't going to be long now before he asks me, but don't you dare tell him—I won't ever forget how the Boss showed me who I really was."

But the Smallest Girl was no longer really listening. She had turned back to the Audio Visual Aid. Across the whole ceiling of the Sunday school it stretched. In the center a great, slowly revolving pinwheel of stars, throwing off little sparks of stars. And stretching out in every direction were the smaller pinwheels and clusters.

It was funny, the Smallest Girl thought. If you looked straight at the walls of the Sunday school, there they were, looking solid and real.

But if you focused your eyes on the Audio Visual Aid, it wasn't like that at all. Your eyes started at the great star cloud in the center, your eyes caught by its foams and whirlpools and running rivulets of stars, all in motion, millions of stars. And as you looked there was a sound, a sound that your *eyes* seemed to hear, a new sound, a music that you knew had always been there but was always new.

Your eyes followed the sound out from the center, out to the other stars, whole islands of stars. Into the distance and distance so far that the islands themselves, each with millions of stars, were nothing but faint and winking points of light, no brighter than single stars. And finally even these points of light winked out completely. You couldn't see them any more at all.

And then suddenly you remembered that you hadn't seen the Sunday school at all. No walls and no roof. You just didn't see them at all, unless you made a funny kind of effort and really *tried* to see them.

The Smallest Girl looked back once more to the medium-sized yellow star with its nine tiny circling dots. She went closer to it. It grew bigger the closer she approached. And each of the circling dots was a world. And the sun and its worlds kept growing bigger. Or was she getting smaller, smaller the closer she approached the growing sun, the growing worlds. Bigger or smaller . . . closer and closer? And closer still and then it was she knew that she had made this star and its worlds her own, of her adoption, always hers.

"Do you think this one has people?" she asked without taking her eyes from the growing star. "Does it have a maker like Boss? Do you suppose it really does?"

But there was no answer from the world that was already almost another world. And the Smallest Girl did not hesitate but took another step and another, out of that world away from the Desert Princess and her Interviewer and the others, and none of them saw through her eyes her new world grow bigger, filling space as she grew smaller . . .

Till finally came the soft, final closing of a door. The darkness. The blaze of light.

And the Smallest Girl was in the world of her choice. And before her was a maker . . .

Accusing. Two green eyes set in unhealthy magenta, staring up at him. And a slosh of gin, a bare finger of gin in the bottle before his eyes.

He drank the gin in one gulp. Then he turned the empty bottle upside down, letting the last drop drip on the counter.

"Scope," he said.

"Did you speak to me, sir?" the waitress behind the wavering counter asked.

"Scope!" he said again, savagely. He looked up at her. "If I had scope enough, if I could only do once, just once, what I'm trying to do, I could build whole universes. Endless islands of universes!"

In sudden anger he jabbed the neck of the bottle he held into one of the accusing green eyes on the plate before him and then into the other. Green ichor spurted across his shirt, over the counter, onto the skirt of the waitress.

"Scope!" he cried, and the shells at his back tinkled with a faint music. The tall sunburnt white man was coming toward him. Trader Horn.

He turned back to the waitress and regarded her. A gazelle of the far veldt she was, and in her eyes the moon of the eastern sea. "Enough scope," he said, "O Moon of the Eastern Sea, and I'd make a dozen island universes for you, just for you, for you—and string them in a bracelet for your wrist . . ."

"Come on, Chief, let's go," Trader Horn said, his big sun-blistered hand on Chief's shoulder, "we gotta make the employment office before it closes, if we're gonna get a gig for tomorrow."

The Smallest Girl felt the sad tears coming and she let them come and she cried for a long time after the two men had left—but the stars in her eyes, the stars of wonder, the stars of her passage, they stayed bright through the tears.

Siesta in Xbalba
and
Return to the States

dedicated to Karena Shields

I.

Late sun opening the book,
blank page like light,
invisible words unscrawled,
impossible syntax
of apocalypse—
Uxmal: Noble Ruins
No construction—

let the mind fall down.

—One could pass valuable months
and years perhaps a lifetime
doing nothing but lying in a hammock
reading prose with the white doves
copulating underneath
and monkeys barking in the interior
of the mountain
and I have succumbed to this
temptation—

"They go mad in the Selva—"
the madman read
and laughed in his hammock

eyes watching me:
unease not of the jungle
the poor dear,

can tire one—
all that mud
and all those bugs . . .
ugh . . .

Dreaming back I saw
an eternal kodachrome
souvenir of a gathering
of souls at a party,
crowded in an oval flash:
cigarettes, suggestions,
laughter in drunkenness,
broken sweet conversation,
acquaintance in the halls,
faces posed together,
stylized gestures,
odd familiar visages
and singular recognitions
that registered indifferent
greeting across time:
Anson reading Horace
with a rolling head,
white-handed Hohnsbean
camping gravely
with an absent glance,
bald Kingsland drinking
out of a huge glass,
Dusty in a party dress,
Durgin in white shoes
gesturing from a chair,
Keck in a corner waiting
for subterranean music,
Helen Parker lifting
her hands in surprise:
all posturing in one frame,

superficially gay
or tragic as may be,
illumed with the fatal
character and intelligent
actions of their lives.

And I in a concrete room
above the abandoned
labyrinth of Palenque
measuring my fate,
wandering solitary in the wild
—blinking singleminded
at a bleak idea—
until exhausted with
its action and contemplation
my soul might shatter
at one primal moment's
sensation of the vast
movement of divinity.

As I leaned against a tree
inside the forest
expiring of self-begotten love,
I looked up at the stars absently,
as if looking for
something else in the blue night
through the boughs,
and for a moment saw myself
leaning against a tree . . .

. . . back there the noise of a great party
in the apartments of New York,
half-created paintings on the walls, fame,
tears and c . . . sucking,

money and arguments of great affairs,
the culture of my generation . . .

my own crude night imaginings,
my own crude soul notes taken down
in moments of isolation, dreams,
piercings, sequences of nocturnal thought
and primitive illuminations

—uncanny feeling the white cat
sleeping on the table
will open its eyes in a moment
and be looking at me—.

One might sit in this Chiapas
recording the apparitions in the field
visible from a hammock
looking out across the shadow of the pasture
in all the semblance of Eternity

. . . a dwarfed thatch roof
down in the grass in a hollow slope
under the tall crowd of vegetation
waiting at the wild edge:
the long shade of the mountain beyond
in the near distance,
its individual hairline of trees
traced fine and dark along the ridge
against the transparent sky light,
rifts and holes in the blue air
and amber brightenings of clouds
disappearing down the other side
into the South . . .

palms with lethargic feelers
rattling in presage of rain,

shifting their fronds
in the direction of the balmy wind,
monstrous animals
sprayed up out of the ground
settling and unsettling
as in water . . .
and later in the night
a moment of premonition
when the plenilunar cloudfilled sky
is still and small.

So spent a night
with drug and hammock
at Chichen Itza on the Castle:—

I can see the moon
moving over the edge of the night forest
and follow its destination
through the clear dimensions of the sky
from end to end of the dark
circular horizon.

High dim stone portals,
entablatures of illegible scripture,
bas-reliefs of unknown perceptions:
and now the flicker of my lamp
and smell of kerosene on the dust-
strewn floor where an ant wends
its nightly ritual way toward great faces
worn down by rain;
yet lamp so bright in solitary yellow
flame in a void
of stars and ruins it makes a light
like ancient flambeaux
vanished out of the fading
grip of stone hands.

In front of me a deathshead
half a thousand years old
—and have seen cocks a thousand
old grown over with moss and batshit
stuck out of the wall
in a dripping vaulted house of rock—
but deathshead's here
on portal still and thinks its way
through centuries the thought
of the same night in which I sit
in skully meditation
—sat in many times before by
artisan other than me
until his image of ghostly change
appeared unalterable—
but now his fine thought's vaguer
than my dream of him:
and only the crude skull figurement's
gaunt insensible glare is left,
with its broken plumes of sensation
and indecipherable headdresses of intellect
scattered in the madness of oblivion
to holes and notes of elemental stone,
blind face of animal transcendency
over the holy ruin of the world
dissolving into the sunless wall of a blackened room
on a time-rude pyramid rebuilt
in the bleak flat night of Yucatan
where I come with my own mad mind to study
alien hieroglyphs of Eternity.

A creak in the rooms scared me.

Some sort of bird, vampire or swallow,
flees with little paper wingflap
around the summit in its own air unconcerned
with the great stone tree I perch on.

Continual metallic
whirr of chicharras,
then lesser chirps
of cricket: 5 blasts
of the leg whistle.
The creak of an opening
door in the forest,
some sort of weird birdsong
or reptile croak.

My hat woven of hennequin
on the stone floor
as a leaf on the waters,
as perishable;
my candle wavers continuously
and will go out.

Pale Uxmal,
unhistoric, like a dream,
Tuluum shimmering on the coast in ruins;
Chichen Itza naked
constructed on a plain;
Palenque, broken chapels in the green
basement of a mount;
lone Kabah by the highway;
Piedras Negras buried again
by dark archaeologists;
Yaxchilan
resurrected in the wild,
and all the limbo of Xbalba still unknown—

floors under roofcomb of branch,
foundation to ornament
tumbled to the flowers,
pyramids and stairways

raced with vine,
limestone corbels down
in the river of trees,
pillars and corridors sunken
under the flood of years:

Time's slow wall overtopping
all that firmament of mind,
as if a shining waterfall
of leaves and rain
were built down solid from the endless sky
through which no thought can pass.

A great red fat rooster
mounted on a tree stump
in the green afternoon,
the ego of the very fields,
screams in the holy sunlight!
—I can't think with that
supersonic cock intensity
crucifying my skull
in its imaginary sleep.

—was looking back
with eyes shut to
where they crawled
like ants on brown old temples
building their minute ruins
and disappearing into the wild
leaving many mysteries
of deathly volition
to be divined.

I alone know the great crystal door
to the House of Night,

a legend of centuries
—I and a few indians.

And had I mules and money I could find
the Cave of Amber
and the Cave of Gold
rumored of the cliffs of Tumbala.

I found the face of one
of the Nine Guardians of the Night
hidden in a mahogany hut
in the Area of Lost Souls
—first relic of kind for that place.

And I found as well a green leaf
shaped like a human heart;
but to whom shall I send this
anachronistic valentine?

For all that I am a ruin myself.

—or like the traveler (of my dream
some nights ago) to the forgotten
country of the ruins,
returning through the barren
exit of dry hills
down to the old beanfields and coffee groves

and leaving on the border
a giant memento, carved
to celebrate
the rocky dreamland of the waste
and edify the folk—

all pure invention of his own,
memorial to its own remoteness,
—some crazy marble slab
of monumental big-hipped men

supporting giant stones
and laboring up the hill
naked: with a communist
inscription at the base:
What Men Do Women Shall Do.

—or awfuller, an earlier dream:

A knight bows darkly on the ground,
His war is of the past:
The God he seeks for he has found,
On Whom he looks at last.

The Figure twisted on the Tree
Casts down a rabid Eye,
The Serpent wakened at Its knee
Utters a sharp cry.

—Have lived much for this futile Sight
And many times have died.
This Cross is for a Beast of Night,
This Image, wild-eyed.

Voltaire's interpretation of this picture, quote:

"No fate more terrible than that of certain black Heroes in isolation of history who have discovered that on that Cross before which they have been brought by Time to kneel and contemplate at last does not hang the image of their Eternal desire."

Rose up
in hammock to write it down
with much difficulty—
night, mosquito nets, no light,
diarrhoea, barefoot—
into the rain in the woods to shit

and try to remember—
I woke up squatting under Mexican trees
in the same position as Black Hero.

Yet these ruins so much
woke me to nostalgia
for the classic stations
of the earth,
the ancient continent
I have not seen
and the few years
of memory left
before the ultimate night
of war.

As if these ruins were not enough,
as if man could go
no further before heaven
till he exhausted
the physical round
of his own mortality
in the obscure cities
hidden in the ageing world

. . . the few actual
ecstatic conscious souls
certain to be found,
familiars . . .

returning after years
to my own scene
transfigured:
to hurry change
to hurry the years
bring me to my fate.

So I dream nightly of an embarcation,

captains, captains,
iron passageways, cabin lights,
Brooklyn across the waters,
the great dull boat, visitors, farewells,
the pure vast sea—
one trip a lifetime's loss or gain:

as Europe is my own imagination
—many shall see her,
many shall not—
though it's only the old familiar world
and not some abstract mystical dream.

And in a moment of previsioning sleep
I see that continent in rain,
black streets, old night, a
fading monument . . .

And a long journey unaccomplished
yet, on antique seas
rolling in gray barren dunes under
the world's waste of light
toward ports of childish geography
the rusty ship will
harbor in . . .

What nights might I not see
penniless among the Arab
mysteries of dirty towns around
the casbahs of the docks?
Clay paths, mud walls,
the smell of green cigarettes,
creosote and rank salt water—
dark structures overhead,
shapes of machinery and façade

of hull: and a bar lamp
burning in the wooden shack
across from the dim
mountain of sulphur on the pier.

Toward what city
will I travel? What wild houses
do I go to occupy?
What vagrant rooms and streets
and lights in the long night
urge my expectation? What genius
of sensation in ancient
halls? what jazz beyond jazz
in future blue saloons?
what love in the cafes of God?

I thought, five years ago
sitting in my apartment,
my eyes were opened for an hour
seeing in dreadful ecstasy
the motionless buildings
of New York rotting
under the tides of Heaven.

There is a god
dying in America
already created
in the imagination of men
made palpable
for adoration:
there is an inner
anterior image
of divinity
beckoning me out
to pilgrimage.

O future, unimaginable God.

Finca Tacalapan de San
Leandro, Palenque,
Chiapas, Mexico 1954—
San Francisco 1955

II.

Jump in time
to the immediate future,
another poem:

return to the old land
penniless and with
a disconnected manuscript,
the recollection of a few
sensations, beginning:

logboat down Rio Michol
under plantain
and drifting trees
to the railroad,

darkness on the sea
looking toward the stations
of the classic world—

another image descending
in white mist
down the lunar highway
at dawn, above
Lake Catemaco on the bus
—it woke me up—
the far away likeness
of a heavenly file
of female saints

stepping upward
on miniature arches
of a gold stairway
into the starry sky,
the thousands of little
saintesses in blue hoods
looking out at me
and beckoning:
SALVATION!

It's true,
simple as in the image.

Then the mummies
in their Pantheon
at Guanajuato—
a city of Cortesian
mines in the first
crevasse of the Sierras,
where I rested—

for I longed to see their
faces before I left:
these weren't mythical rock
images, tho stone
—limestone effigies out
of the grave, remains
of the fatal character—

newly resurrected,
grasping their bodies
with stiff arms, in soiled
funeral clothes;
twisted, knock-kneed,
like burning
screaming lawyers—

what hallucinations

of the nerves?—

indecipherable-sexed;
one death-man had
raised up his arms
to cover his eyes,
significant timeless
reflex in sepulchre:

apparitions of immortality
consumed inward,
waiting openmouthed
in the fireless darkness.
Nearby, stacked symmetrically,
a skullbone wall ending
the whitewashed corridor
under the graveyard
—foetid smell reminiscent
of sperm and drunkenness—
the skulls empty and fragile,
numerous as shells,
—so much life passed through
this town . . .

The problem is isolation
—there in the grave
or here in oblivion of light.

Of eternity we have
a numbered score of years
and fewer tender moments
—one moment of tenderness
and a year of intelligence
and nerves: one moment of pure
bodily tenderness—

I could dismiss Allen with grim
pleasure.

Reminder: I knelt in my room
on the patio at San Miguel
at the keyhole: 2 A.M.
The old woman lit a candle.
Two young men and their girls
waited before the portal,
news from the street. She
changed the linen, smiling.

What joy! The nakedness!
They dance! They talk
and simper before the door,
they lean on a leg,
hand on a hip, and posture,
nudity in their hearts,
they clap a hand to head
and whirl and enter,
pushing each other,
happily, happily
to a moment of love . . .

What solitude I've
finally inherited.

Afterward fifteen hours
on rubbled single lane,
broken bus rocking along
the maws and continental crags
of mountain afternoon,
the distant valleys fading,
regnant peaks beyond

to days on the Pacific
where I bathed—

then riding, fitful,

gazing, sleeping
through the desert
beside a wetback
sad-faced old-man-
youth, exhausted
to Mexicali

to stand
near one night's dark shack
on the garbage cliffs
of bordertown overhanging
the tin house poor
man's village below,
a last night's
timewracked brooding
and farewell,
the end of a trip.

—Returning
armed with New Testament,
critic of horse and mule,
tanned and bearded
satisfying Whitman, concerned
with a few Traditions,
metrical, mystical, manly
. . . and certain characteristic flaws

—enough!

The nation over the border
grinds its arms and dreams
of war: I see
the fiery blue clash
of metal wheels
clanking in the industries
of night, and

detonation of infernal
bombs

. . . and the silent downtown
of the States
in watery dusk submersion.

Guanajuato—Los Angeles, 1954

[NOTE: *Uxmal and other proper names mentioned in the first part of the poem are those of ruined cities. Xbalba, translatable as Morning Star in Region Obscure, or Hope, and pronounced Chivalvá, is the area in Chiapas between the Tobasco border and the Usumascintla River at the edge of the Peten Rain Forest; the boundary of lower Mexico and Guatemala today is thereabouts. The locale was considered a Purgatory or Limbo, the legend is vague, in the (Old) Mayan Empire. To the large tree at the crest of what is now called Mount Don Juan, at the foot of which this poem was written, ancient craftsmen came to complete work left unfinished at their death.*]

ALEXANDER TROCCHI: From "Cain's Book"

It is not far from Flushing to the Village. There is a train direct to 42nd Street. But again I won't go in. There is nothing for me to go there for now. It is as though a quick and spasmodic plague wiped out our shadow city. And the rest fled. Only the citadel remains, for each of us alone who is not behind bars.

Centre everywhere, circumference nowhere. Lethal dose, variable.

It happened to some of us that we could no longer go outside the citadel.

I remember nights without, cold streets, unfriendly saloons, great distances. Fear. Nine hours until daylight (not that that made much difference, except that you could sit in the park amongst people who played), no reason for being anywhere rather than anywhere else, and without. This is the steel edge of hysteria, the point of a knife against an indrawn abdomen. It is difficult to breathe.

There is no one in this city before whom I can weep.

Noticing things, like traffic signals, and lights in porches and on empty lots. The failure to notice will bring back the reality of being without the citadel.

I noticed such things last night.

The city had never seemed so unfriendly, the faces so unlovable.

The bars blared and the automobiles were particularly like spaceships. A corner drugstore opened its crocodile jaws and exhaled yellow light. Four crooked figures set wide apart at the bar, four men, and a stand of bright paperbacks (the dispensary was in the rear).

Walk along Eighth Street after midnight and watch the men lean towards you.

No it is not that, and it is not that, and it is not that!

And there were the nights on pot, a long way from Midhou, *fumeur du hashish et raconteur,* when we played without fear, but those nights come seldom now, and the rest is grey and the same. Was everything always as it is? Does a man spend all his life waking up from a dream?

An old man called Molloy or Malone walked across country. When he was tired he lay down and when it rained he decided to turn over and receive it on his back. The rain washed the name right out of him.

It is a question of making an inventory.

This afternoon I stood in the yard of the Mac Asphalt and Construction Corporation and felt like making an inventory of the things and relations that are near me now. It wasn't the first time I'd felt like making such an inventory. I've tried more than once. Indeed, everything I write is a kind of inventorizing, and I don't expect ever to be able to do much more. And the inventories will always be unfinished. The most I can do is to die like Malone with a last dot of lead pinched between forefinger and thumb, writing perhaps: *mais tout de même on se justifie mal*!

And from time to time I think up epilogues for *Cain's Book*. God knows if I'll ever be able to put a stop to this habit. I'd need an eye in the back of my head and a hand that could propel me by the scruff of my own neck. Wanting them, and with the creeping behind, the sudden onsets of panic, that and the inventorizing are easily explained. To have something to be existing in relation to. A tradition for example, or a set of mental objects, or a turd, or a fag end. And to be able to fix the existence, with finality. Anyway, I became sure my literature had to begin with the inventory, and perhaps end with it. It's a question of what is left to us, what has not been bled by amputators and polishers of all blasphemy, and it's a narrow territory now. You must know that before you can begin. You must "fix" yourself as a mariner does before the storm strikes.

When I came to the city I came to a woman I had loved in Europe. That was Chloe, the one who was right or wrong about Jody, or who was concerned for me. Chloe was a smallish girl with soft, saffron-tinted flesh and black hair she sometimes wore like an American Indian. She had large, beautiful brown eyes, and a high-cheekboned, Madonna-like face. When she lay naked on the bed her body was like the *Rokeby Venus* by Velasquez.

When Chloe left me to return to America I suppose I wanted her to go. Since then, I have been with no other woman for long. I have been with many. In Europe, in Paris and in London, her image always came to me when I was with another woman. I never found one who was as beautiful as Chloe had been. But when I came to New York there was more than a year's experience we had lived apart, more than a year during which I had lived even more precariously than we had done together in Paris and during which she, returned to her own country, had not.

She was cool from the moment I arrived. (All America was cool from the moment I arrived.) And yet she loved me too. And so we grew away from one another gently, and terribly. And, except for a small Negro who, back in his own environment, was becoming more inconspicuous every day, she was all I had in New York out of the past.

There were many moments when I despaired of others, gave them up, let them stray out of the circle of light and definition, and they were free to come and go, bringing panic or chaos or joy, depending on my own mood, my state of readiness.

Readiness. There is the virtue of the citadel.

I thought that only in America could such hysteria be. Or in Russia. Only where the urge to conform has become a faceless President reading a meaningless speech to a huge, faceless people in a pink plastic eating barracks, only where machinery has impressed its forms deep into the fibres of the brain so as to make efficiency and the willingness to co-operate the only

flags of value, where all extravagance, even of love, is condemned, and where a million faceless mind-doctors stand in long corridors in white coats, ready to observe, adjust, shock-operate . . . only here could such hysteria be. I thought that there were werewolves everywhere in the wake of the last great war, that in America they were referred to as "delinquents," a pasteurized symbol, obscuring terrible profundities of the human soul. And I thought: Now I know what it is to be a *European* and far from my native soil. And I saw a garbage truck, one of those great grey anonymous tanklike objects which roam the streets of New York, move beetlelike out of Tenth Street into Sixth Avenue, and on its side was a poster which read: "I am an American, in thought and deed." And there was the Statue of Liberty too.

Sometimes, at low moments, I felt that my thoughts were the ravings of a man mad out of his mind to have been placed in history at all, having to act, having to consider. A victim of the fixed in-squint. Sometimes I thought: What a long distance History has taken me out of my way! And then I said: *Let it go, let it go, let them all go*! And inside I was intact and brittle as the shell of an egg. I pushed them all away from me again and I was alone like an obscene little Buddha, looking in.

At what point does liberty become license?

And a question for lawyers: *How many will hang that the distinction may crystalize*?

A quarter of an hour ago I gave myself a fix.

My scow is tied up in the canal at Flushing, N. Y., alongside the landing-stage of the Mac Asphalt and Construction Corporation. It is just after five in the afternoon. Today at this time it is still afternoon, and the sun, striking the cinder-blocks of the main building of the works, has turned them pink. The motor-cranes and the decks of the other scows tied up round about are deserted. Cain is at his orisons, Narcissus at his mirror.

I stood the needle and the eye-dropper in a glass of cold water and lay down on the bed. Inside the dropper the water was tinged pink.

It was a heavy dose. I felt giddy almost at once. I had to be careful. Two of the building-yard workmen in wide blue dungarees and wearing baseball caps were hanging about. From time to time they crossed my catwalk. They were inquisitive. They had heard the noise of my typewriter during the afternoon and that was sufficient to arouse their curiosity. It is not usual for a scow captain to carry a typewriter.

The canal water is smooth and dark green, its mirror-like surface bearing a scum of oil, dust, paper, and an occasional plank of wood. There are two yellow sand scows at a yard at the other side of the canal. The scow which is nearly light looms over the loaded scow like a pier over a low-lying jetty. On the scow which rides high out of the water there is a Portuguese Negro and his woman. The cabin of the other scow is locked up. For a while during the afternoon I sat outside on my catwalk and watched the Negro who stood watching his scow being unloaded. The unloading crane had a distinctive putter. Even across the short breadth of the canal it seemed to come from a great distance, like the sound of a tractor in a field far away, and that sound mingled with the sound of all the other cranes working on the canal, and they swung about, the grabs rising and falling, hawsers straining, and they were like big steel birds with no wings and no plumage, nodding and pecking all the afternoon. The Negro was smoking a pipe. His woman came out of the cabin from time to time with a bucket of slop or to hang out some wet clothes. I was too far away from her to see her features clearly. She is blond and wears a colourless smock. One time she looked across at me.

Lying on the bed I heard the buzz of a fly and I noticed it was worrying the dry corpse of another fly which was half-gouged into the plank of the wall. I wondered about that and

then my attention wandered. A few minutes later I heard it buzz again and saw that it was still at its work, whatever it was, settled on the rigid jutting legs of the corpse. The legs grew out of the black spot like a little sprout of eyelashes. The live fly was busy. I wondered whether it was blood it wanted and whether flies like wolves or rats will eat off their own kind.

The mind under heroin is quite as evasive as it is ordinarily; one is aware only of contents. The form itself is not available to perception. But this whole way of posing the question, of dividing the mind from that of which it is aware, is fruitless. Nor is it so much that the objects of perception are altered as they are said to be under mescalin, nor that they are perceived more intensely or in a more enchanted or detailed and chaotic way as I have sometimes found them to be under marijuana; it is that perceiving turns inward, the eyelids droop, the blood is aware of itself, and the flesh; it is that the organism has a sense of being intact and unbrittle, and, above all, inviolable—for the attitude born of this sense of inviolability some Americans have invented the word "cool."

It is evening now. The cabin is cooler and the objects are growing dim. In a few moments I'll get up and light my lamps.

What the hell am I doing here?

I do not seriously pose this question here and now lying on my bunk, and under the influence of heroin, inviolable. That is one of the virtues of the drug, that it empties such questions of all anguish, transports them to another region, a painless, theoretical region, a play region, surprising, fertile, and unmoral. One is no longer grotesquely involved in the becoming. One simply is. I remember saying to Sebastian, before he returned to Europe with his new wife, that it was imperative to know what it was to be a vegetable. I should have added "as well."

. . . The illusory sense of adequacy induced in a man by

the drug. Illusory? Can such sense-data be false? Inadequate? In relation to what? The facts? What facts? Marxian facts? Freudian facts? Mendelian facts? More and more I found it necessary to suspend such facts, to exist simply in abeyance, to give up, if you will, and I came naked to comprehension.

(Time on the scows . . .

Day and night soon became for me merely light and dark, daylight or oil-lamp, and often the oil-lamp became paler into the long dawn. It was the warmth of the sun that came on my cheek and on my hand through the window which made me get up and go outside and find the sun already far overhead and the skyscrapers of Manhattan suddenly and impressively and irrelevantly there in a haze of heat. And as for that irrelevance . . . I often wondered how *far out* a man could go without being obliterated. It is an oblique way to look at Manhattan, seeing it islanded there for days on end across the buffering water like a little mirage in which one is not involved, for at times I knew it objectively and with anxiety as a nexus of hard fact, as my very condition. Sometimes it was like trumpets, that architecture.

It is not possible to come quite naked to comprehension and it is difficult to sustain even an approximate attitude without shit, horse, heroin. Details, impressionistic, lyrical. I became fascinated by the minute to minute sensations, and when I reflected I did so repetitively and exhaustingly on the meaningless texture of the present moment, the cries of gulls, a floating spar, a shaft of sunlight, and it was not long before the sense of being alone overtook me, alone and lost and without hope of ever entering the city with its complicated relations, its plexus of outrageous purpose. And then I was at the brink of hysteria.)

What the hell am I doing here?

The question threw itself at me from all the drab walls of my cabin as one evening the tug *Buchanan* pulled my scow far out into the estuary of the Hudson River, tied her to a stakeboat in the middle of Upper Bay, and, for reasons known no doubt to some bookkeeper, abandoned me there in wind and rain for four nights and four days.

In the America I found nothing was ever in abeyance. Things moved or they were subversive. Perhaps it was thus, to leave America without going away, to retreat into abeyance, that I came to be on a river-scow. (Other places I might have come to: prison, madhouse, morgue.)

It has been so unexpected. I was not prepared. It was on a Friday evening around eight. The phone rang at Chloe's flat in the Village. There had been a change of plans. They were going to pull out my scow from Pier 72 in an hour. I was to get on board at once. I was short on stores, short on water, and short on cigarettes. I had expected to have the weekend free. All week I had been alone, moving slowly up and down rivers with my load of stone. To have chosen (almost hysterically) to be alone, to be a man continually choosing to be alone, and to have chosen not to be alone, and then to have been for one hour with Chloe, and then to be forced to be alone again, seeing on Chloe's face no answering panic, but its utter absence, and the sudden flicker of guilt as she became conscious of what I missed, and the quick look of tenderness which came then, gratuitously given, and for a terrible instant of awareness rejected by *me*—I was struck dumb.

Je pense donc je suis. Perhaps, considering the plundered Tree of Knowledge, Descartes spoke of suffering.

"Oh, darling!" Chloe said. And her voice was not false, but neither was it mine.

The Eighth Avenue bus took me to 34th Street, the Crosstown on 34th to Pier 72. The tug was already there and I boarded the *Edward J. Mulroy* under a flood of insults from

the tugboat captain. The scowman is the leper of the New York waterfront, he is old and can't work or he is a zombie who won't. The four scows linked together single file lay with the down tide from a corner of Pier 73 for three hours. Shortly after midnight the tug returned and the short slow haul down the North River to the stakeboat in Upper Bay began. Mine was the last scow and I sat aft at my open cabin door and watched the dark west waterfront of Manhattan slide away to the right. I thought of a night two months before when I had a girlfriend aboard for a short trip and how at the same kind of midnight we went naked over the end of a long tow, each in the hempen eye of a dockline, screaming sure and mad off Wall Street as the dark waves struck.

We arrived at *Bronx Stakeboat Number 2* shortly after three in the morning and the tug, churning foam on the black water, backed away, its bell clanking instructions to the engine-room. She slewed round then and moved quickly away into the darkness. I watched her for a few minutes until the glow from her decklights dimmed and only the mast-lights were visible. Then I entered the cabin.

A chair, a typewriter, a table, a single bed, a coal stove. a dresser, a cupboard, a man in a little wooden shack, a mile from the nearest land.

This night was going to be interminable.

I split a log and got the fire going. That helped. For a few moments, until I smoked a cigarette, stubbed it in an overflowing ashtray, and wondered what to do next.

Even then, and all this is some months ago now, I was no sooner alone than I would begin urgently to take stock.

I had come to New York from London and when I realised that Chloe was no longer in love with me I got a job on the scows. Time to think, to take stock. The grey table in front of me strewn with papers, inventories from the past, from Paris, from London, notes neatly typed, notes deleted, affirmations, denials, short bursts of coherence, sudden terrifying

contradictions, a mass of evidence that I had been in abeyance, far out, unable to act, for a long time.

I wrote for example: "If I write: it is important to keep writing, it is to keep me writing. It is as though I find myself on a new planet, without a map, and having everything to learn. I have unlearned. I have become a stranger."

Everywhere throughout the notes the haunting sense of dispossession. It was as though I were writing hesitantly, against the tide, with the growing suspicion that what I was writing was no more nor less than a confession that I was in some criminal sense against History, that in the end it could lead me only to the hangman. I thought that it wasn't surprising that many writers, particularly of my class, underprivileged in a dying culture, shied away from the painful consciousness of their isolation and longed to be immersed in what was safe, without risk, in what was objective. It was dangerous to be in this sense "free" . . . in its lust after extinction the human soul has learned promiscuous ways.

There was, for example, Tom's place, near the Bowery.

Fay and I walked over together from a place on Sheridan Square. We walked quickly, knowing that Tom would arrive at the same time, or shortly after, with the heroin.

"It's going to be good, baby," Fay said.

The room had a low sloping ceiling with two small windows on one side and a fireplace on a raised brick hearth in an opposite corner, at the far end of the adjacent side. Sometimes the Negro burned a few sticks in the grate and we sat with our knees at the level of the fire which cast shadows on the dirty ceiling and walls and on the bricks of the fireplace, the three of us on a small backless couch spread over with a fawn blanket, looking into the fire, Fay in the centre, still wearing her moth-eaten fur coat, her arms folded, her head sunk on her chest, her slightly bulbous, yellowish eyes closed. We sat there after we had fixed and watched wood burn. The white

boxwood burned quickly. The Negro leaned forward and added a few sticks to the blaze. He was a tall man in his late twenties, lean, with a beautiful, pale, lean face expressionless often as porcelain, the nose long, the eyes half-closed and heavily lidded under the drug.

I also am tall. I was wearing my heavy white seaman's jersey with a high polo neck, and I sensed that the angularity of my face—big nose, high cheekbones, sunken eyes—was at present softened by the shadows and smoothed—the effect of the drug—out of its habitual nervousness. I had come from Europe a few months before. My name is Joseph Necchi. My eyes were closed. My elbows rested on my thighs and my hands were clasped in front of me. The Negro, who sometimes spoke of the West Indies, was called Tom Tear.

At that moment I felt impelled to speak and I said: "My father had false teeth."

I was aware that I flashed a quick, intimate glance first at Tom, across Fay's line of vision, and then, turning my head slightly, I caught the glint of appraisal in her protruding brown eyes.

"Yes," I said, and my face grew radiant, encouraging them to listen, "he had yellow dentures."

Tom's teeth—they were long and yellowish and gave his mouth a look of bone—were clenched in a tight smile, the pale lips falling away, exposing them. It was almost a mask of ecstasy, *part of the game,* I should have said in some contexts, in some rooms.

Fay's face was more reserved. Swinish? More like a pug than a pig. Her untidy dark hair tumbled into her big fur collar. A yellow female pigdog, her face in its warm nest beginning to stir with knowing.

"He was outside in the hall, spying on the lodgers," I said. "My father was a born quisling, and he had false teeth."

Tom Tear's face was patient and serene. The flicker of the fire stirred in the sparse black stubble on his lower face, mak-

ing the hairs glint.

I went on for the friendly silence: "While he was in the hall his false teeth were squatting like an octopus in a glass of water on the kitchen dresser. The plates were a dark orange brick colour and the teeth were like discoloured piano-keys. They seemed to breathe at the bottom of the glass. The water was cloudy and tiny bubbles clung to the teeth. That was the kitchen where we lived, and they sat there like a breathing eye, watching us."

Fay's bluish lips had fallen apart in a smile. She made a grunt of understanding through her decayed teeth. Fay was forty-two. She had lived all her life in this city.

Tom Tear leaned forward and threw more wood on the fire. Wood was plentiful. We gathered it when we could be bothered on the streets.

"He went on tiptoe about the hall for nine years," I said, "in tennis shoes and without his teeth. The hall was no man's land."

Tom Tear nodded as he leaned back again away from the fire. His right cheek, which was all I saw from where I sat, was impassive, long and smooth.

"If someone came to the front door he came flying back into the kitchen for his teeth. He came in puffing and blowing with his hand on his paunch. He wore a collarless shirt with a stud in it and he went around in his shirt-sleeves and this old grey, sleeveless pullover." I paused. A white stick darkened and burst into flame. "When he grew older he became less frantic about the teeth," I said, smiling. "He slipped them into his mouth furtively in front of the visitor as though he suddenly remembered and didn't want to give offence. Perhaps he no longer needed defences."

"He'd given up by that time," Fay said. She looked straight into the fire.

We were all silent for a moment. I felt I had to go on. I said: "I'll tell you a story . . ."

The others smiled. Fay touched the back of my hand with

her fingertips. I noticed she had prominent eyeteeth.

"It's not really a story," I said. "It's something I read somewhere, about a river bushman. This man wanted to track down some bushmen and he went to a place called Serongo in the swamps. One day he caught sight of a bushman paddling alone in a boat and he asked his head bearer if he would speak to him and get him to lead them to his tribe. The bearer told him he had known the bushman for thirty years, that he lived alone on a termite mound in the middle of the swamps, and he was deaf and dumb as well."

The others looked at me. I moved my clasped hands forward and stared at the thumbs. They were dirty at the knuckles and at the nails.

"We've all given up," I said then.

We were all silent.

"It's necessary to give up first," I began tentatively, "but it should be a beginning . . ." I sensed an ambiguity, something not quite authentic, and stopped speaking.

"Go on," Tom said after a moment.

But the mood had left me and I shook my head. I closed my eyes.

Again we were all silent. The smoke from the burning wood wound its way towards the chimney, some of it spilling outwards into the room where it clung to the low ceiling.

"Does anyone want to go out?" Fay said.

When neither of us answered she made the motion of snuggling inside her warm fur coat. "It's cold outside, too cold," she said.

I was sitting hunched forward with my eyes closed, my chin deep in the high woollen collar. The phrase *"ex nihil nihil fit"* had just come to me. It seemed to me that nothing would be beginning, ever. And I almost smiled.

Tom Tear, who a moment before had moved to a stool at the side of the fireplace, was leaning backwards against the wall and his soft black eyelashes stirred like a clot of moving

insects at his eyes. His face had the look of smoke and ashes, like a bombed city. It was at rest, outwardly.

There was a bed in the room, a low double bed on which three dirty grey army blankets had been stretched. On the wall between the two square windows—they were uncurtained and at night the four panes of glass in each were black and glossy—was a faded engraving, unframed. It curled away from the wall at one corner where the scotch tape had come away. There were two similar engravings on two other walls, both of them warped and one of them with a tear at the corner. On the fourth wall there was an unskilful pencil sketch of some trees and a water-colour of a woman's face, vague and pink, and painted on flimsy paper. This was the work of Tom Tear's girlfriend. A self-portrait. He talked of her now and again, always vaguely. She was kicking her habit in some clinic out of town. The last piece of furniture, apart from the backless couch and the stool on which Tom Tear sat, was a draughtsman's table which tilted on a ratchet to any required angle. This was the table on which Tom Tear would work if ever he became an architect. At that moment the table was horizontal and there was a clock on it, and an electric lamp which didn't work, and a burning candle, and a radio with a plastic cabinet in which another clock was inlaid. Both clocks said twenty-five past nine. That was all there was on the table, apart from the spike, and the glass of water, and the spoon.

We had fixed over an hour ago. We had used all the heroin.

Each of us was conscious of the well-being of the others. The blaze of wood in the fireplace made our cheeks glow. Our faces were smooth, and serene.

"I can't do with it and I can't do without it," Fay had said earlier as she prodded the back of her left hand—the flesh thin there and waxy—in search of a possible vein. At the third attempt she found a vein and the blood rose up through the needle into the eye-dropper and appeared as a dark red

tongue in the colourless solution. "Hit," she said softly, with a slow smile. When she put the eye-dropper with the needle attached back into the glass of water and dabbed the back of her bluish hand with tissue paper there was no longer any fear in her eyes, only certainty, and in their yellowish depths ecstasy. I knew at that moment she was impregnable. I laughed softly at her and touched the slack flesh of her cheek lightly with my fingers. At that moment I was happy for her and I knew that she, when she watched me fix, in a moment now, would be happy for me. Gratuitously.

Each of us was conscious of the well-being of the others. The sense of well-being in each of us was reinforced by that consciousness.

I said suddenly that the wheel hadn't been invented yet. "The wheel hasn't been invented yet," I said.

We were sitting, three white faces towards the fire, a crude fire, and gloom beyond our shoulders. Fay's moth-eaten fur coat was gathered under her chin like an old animal-skin. "Outside," Fay said, her protruding yellow eyes glinting dully in the firelight, "there is the jungle." She laughed huskily and laid her friendly blue hand on my knee.

Tom's face tilted towards the ceiling, remained idyllic, inviolable.

"And it's raining outside," she said softly.

A moment later, she said: "You said your father was a spy, Joe. You mean he was inquisitive?"

I said: "The job he had before he became unemployable was a spy's job. He was a musician to begin with but he became a spy. His job was to snoop round clubs and concert halls to see that no one infringed copyrights. He was the fuzz, the executioner, the man. He was always closing curtains . . ." I leaned across and whispered loudly in Fay's ear . . . "Don't you know that people can see in?"

I said: "In the end he identified himself so completely with Authority that he became unemployable, he took too much upon himself, he felt himself free to make executive decisions,

even if he was only the doorman. When he was summoned during the war for selling confectionery at black market rates without coupons . . . he sold it by the quarter pound to anyone who expressed conservative sentiments . . . he ranted against socialism and red tape. When he was arrested for soliciting on the street he pleaded with tears in his eyes that he was only trying to control a queue."

Fay was poking at the fire with a stick, smiling like a yellow idol.

"I'll go and break some more wood," I said. I got up and moved over to the door. As I opened it Tom's dog bounded in. "That damn dog again," I heard Fay say as I crossed the large, low studio, now brimming over with lumber and other materials, into which the door led. I selected a flimsy box and began to break it into pieces.

My mother was proud and my father was an unemployed musician with the name of an Italian. The blue-black hairs on my father's legs gave to his flesh the whiteness of beeswax. I associated him with the odours of pomade and *Sloan's Liniment*. The bathroom was his lair and his unguents were contained in a white cabinet affixed by four screws to a green wall. The pomade came in a squat jar with a red cap, the liniment in a flat bottle on whose label was an engraved likeness of Dr. Sloan. Because of his strange mustache I always thought of Dr. Sloan as an Italian. It was not until today that it occurred to me to suspect that he was not. The name of the maker of the pomade was Gilchrist, and yet it too was oily and glistened in my father's scalp.

In my father's obsequiousness there was an assurance but as he grew older he became reflective during the winter months. His step quickened but his distances were less ambitious. He spent more time in smokerooms over coffee and didn't move out again into the street until the waitresses had begun to sweep away the fag ends which had been trodden into the carpet and to polish the glass tops of the tables. At

that point he glanced at the clock he had been aware of since he came in, pretended to have found himself once again in time confronted by an overlooked appointment, and walked purposively to the swing doors. In one of his ungloved hands he carried a small leather briefcase which contained the morning paper, the evening paper, and a pale blue box of deckled notepaper with envelopes to match. Sometimes he stopped abruptly on the pavement and fingered the lapel of his heavy coat. He looked guiltily at the feet of the people who passed him on either side. And then he walked more slowly. Every so often, just in that way, he remembered his angina. The word stuck in his throat. He was afraid to die on the public thoroughfare.

Sunday. My father would be awake before the milk and morning newspapers were delivered. He slept four or five hours at most. After the death of my mother he lived alone. At nine he shaved. Not before. The number of such necessary enterprises was very meagre. He had to spread them thinly over the day to prevent the collapse of his world. The fort wall was a frail one between my father and his freedom. He shored it up daily by complex ordinance. He was chosen for by an old selector system of tested rites. He gargled, watching his eyes in the mirror. He polished his shoes. He prepared his breakfast. He shaved. After that he staved off chaos until he had purchased the morning paper. Births, marriages, and deaths. He moved up and down the columns at the edge of himself. But with the years he achieved skill. Either way he was safe. If none of the names meant anything to him he could enjoy relief; if a friend had died he could after that first flicker of triumph be involved in solemnity. His hours were lived in that way, against what was gratuitous, but because he was all the time envious . . . at the brink. There is no suspicion so terrible as the vague and damning awareness that one was free to choose from the beginning.

Notes towards the making of a monster . . . That was one title I had considered. When at one of those bad moments, when the dykes crumble, there is a certain relief in inventing titles.

4 A.M. And it was as though I watched a robot living himself, watching, waiting, smiling, gesticulating . . . writing . . . for even as I prepare this document, saying I cannot sleep, I watch myself preparing it. I have stopped at this moment. Ten seconds? Five? The robot goes on writing, recording, unmasking himself, and there are two of us, the one who enters into the experience and the one who, watching, assures his defeat. To look into oneself endlessly is to be aware of what is discontinuous and null; it is to sever the *I* who is aware from the *I* of whom he is aware—and who is *he*? What is *I* doing in the third person? Identities, like the successive skins of onions are shed each as soon as it is contemplated; caught in the act of pretending to be conscious, they are *seen*. The confidence men.

Cain's Book, then.

Cain's Book is Cain's consciousness and its transcending. Look at him. He is lean as Cassius. Mark him well. He is shifty. He has travelled in many places. There is in him an ancient man, a doubter, and his hands are strong. Mark the mass above the eyes, the forehead sloping back, the long head, the small, close-set ears. It was not for nothing that Midhou was Cain's friend and Cain Midhou's. Cain is much alone. Thus when he is amongst men he can play, generously. Generosity sits on his mouth like a plume. And his jaw is strong.

What the hell am I doing here?

At certain moments I find myself looking on my whole life as leading up to the present moment, the present being all I have to affirm. It is somehow undignified to speak of the past or to think about the future.

From these sprawling notes:

The present is shored up by the past, and the not yet, a void haunted by naked will, is too slickly furnished by the world's orators, like a harem in a Hollywood film, with no short hairs.

When I was three I went to bed at night with a stuffed white bird. It's feathers were soft against my face. But it was a dead bird and sometimes I looked at it hard and for a long time. Sometimes I ran my thumbnail along the split in the rigid beak. Sometimes I sucked the blue beads that had been sewn in place of the eyes, tasting thought. And when the beak was prised open and wouldn't close again I disliked the bird and sought justifications. It was indeed a bad bird.

Another note:

There are times when the Citadel becomes a cell and the prisoner has the impulse to grasp the bars and shout out to the warder for a key, for a map; the desert is too thick, the sun scorching; but beneath the blue cap is the same familiar face; on the hip is the same familiar gun.

At such times Cain had to have his drugs. As they were inflicted upon himself they were condemned, as those were praised which Abel inflicted upon others. Abel was an honourable man; upright like a pillar, he had the good of others at his arse.

My father peeped out of doors. He watched the movements of others. When I was four I fell from a swing and broke my arm. When it was set in plaster I asked for a big box with a lid on it, like the one the cat slept in. I put it in a corner near the fire in the kitchen and climbed into it and closed the lid. I lay for hours in the dark, hearing sounds, of my mother's moving about, of the presence of others in the kitchen, and inside sensing the heat of my own presence. I was not driven from my box until after my arm was healed, and then at my

father's insistence. It was a stupid game, he said. And the box was in the way. A boy needed fresh air. And when I looked at my father he could not look me in the eye.

When I write I have trouble with my tenses. Where I *was* tomorrow is where I *am* today, where I *would be* yesterday. I have a horror of committing fraud. It is all very difficult, the past even more than the future, for the latter is at least probable, calculable, while the former is beyond the range of experiment. The past is always a lie, clung to by the odour of ancestors. It is important from the beginning to treat such things lightly. As the ghosts rise upwards over the grave-wall, I recoffin them neatly and bury them.

And the present is wordless.

When I returned to the small room with my arms full of broken sticks, the terrier, a bone in its mouth now, growled savagely. That dog had a mad eye. I looked down at the shaggy brown head, at the shining wet fangs, and at the mad eyeball, and I said quietly: "What a f . . king animal!"

"Get out!" Tom Tear yelled at the dog. "Get the hell out of here, you ill-mannered bitch!" He got up, grabbed the dog by the collar, and ran it into the next room.

I put the sticks down near the fireplace and added a few to the flames.

"He should get rid of it," Fay said before Tom returned.

"He's mad," I said. "You know last night in the street another dog tried to mount her. Tom went stark raving mad. He's so damn proud she's a thoroughbred."

"I don't want her knocked up by any lousy mongrel!" Fay mimicked. "He's too much."

(Tom, the American Negro who claimed birth in the West Indies—many pale American Negroes claim similar descent, a mark of caste—and who claimed Scotch, Welsh, and Indian as well as Negro ancestry did not want his blue-blooded terrier interfered with by any mongrel cur. *"For Chrissake, Tom, think!"*

"That dog is me," Tom said once. And it was. It was vicious and untrustworthy and it bit his friends. "She was badly treated by her first owner!" Evidently she attacked even those who fed her. Like Tom, she never had a chance . . .)

"Jesus," Fay said, "all that sentimental crap makes me sick. I don't know why he doesn't get rid of it."

Tom Tear came back, closing the door behind him. The dog whimpered on the far side of it. Tom sat down on the stool at the side of the fireplace. For a few minutes none of us spoke.

"Seen Jody lately?" Fay asked me.

"No. Have you?"

Fay shook her head. "Tom saw her yesterday," she said.

I looked over at Tom.

"In Jim Moore's," he said. "She wanted to score but she didn't have the loot."

"How was she?" I said mechanically. The question came from a theoretical part of me, and yet I was involved in it, and I was more interested in a possible answer than either of the others knew. I supposed I loved Jody. Lately, anyway, I had been acting as if I did . . . I love Jody. But it was almost a sensation, intense, fragile, relative, a state of being, a hint of possibility. If Jody had been in the room at that moment, lying on the bed, and if she said: "Come and lie down beside me, Joe," I would have gone and lain down beside her.

"O.K.," Tom said. "She looked O.K."

But I had no impulse to go out and look for her. If I had known then she was sitting in Jim Moore's I would not have gone to Jim Moore's to pick her up.

"You mean she was sweating her ass off for a fix but was looking all the same fine, Tom?"

"Yeah!" Fay said.

"She doesn't sweat much," Tom said. "She's not hooked."

Listening to the tone of his voice I wondered why he didn't like Jody. I had asked him more than once but he was always

evasive in his replies.

"She's no chippie, man!" Fay said to Tom, fixing her bilious yellow eyes on him. They glinted like yellow ivory in the firelight.

Tear said he didn't say she was but she didn't use enough shit to have a real habit.

"A 'real' habit," Fay said ironically. "She takes all she can get, man."

"She could hustle, she could boost more," Tear said.

"Sure, she could make a profession of it," I said, with pain and irony.

"That's the trouble in this country," Fay said. "You take shit and it becomes your profession."

. . . Feed my habit, I was thinking. That's what Chloe had said to me: "Jody! She just uses you! She lies in her little nest and waits for you to come and feed her. She's like a bird, a fat, greedy little bird!" The thought only amused me. It was not that I hadn't thought about it myself. Jody would "burn" me mercilessly. I amused myself by telling Chloe that I loved Jody. "And she loves you, I suppose! You're a fool, Joe! She loves horse! My God, it makes me mad! And you come to me for money to buy shit for her! She doesn't even let you screw her!" "Yes, that's too much," I said quickly, "but it doesn't matter, Chloe, not in the way you think, and not as much as you think it does." I remembered Jody saying: "When we do make love, Joe, it'll be the end!" The "end love," she meant, the ultimate. . . . Like an overdose, Jody?

"When you're not on," Fay said, "you're looking for it or looking for money to get it with."

"It simplifies things," I said with a smile. "Are you ready to simplify things and become a professional, Tom?"

Fay laughed huskily.

"I'm gonna kick tomorrow," Tom said woodenly.

We both looked at him.

"I mean it, f . . k it all!" he said. "I've been on this kick

long enough. It's no f . . king good. I spend most of my time in the subway. Backward and forwards. To cop."

"Yeah," Fay said, poking the fire again. "It's a big drag."

Of course I knew I was playing with them as I always played. And they were playing with me and with each other. I wondered whether it wasn't always like that. In all living how could you expect other people to act except "as if"? At this point I was involved once again in the feeling of thinking something not quite authentic and I allowed the heroin to come back and take me entirely, and then only the room existed, like a cave, like "Castle Keep," and if other people existed it didn't matter, it didn't matter at all. The jungle could encroach no further than the tips of my fingers. No matter what went before, from the moment of the fix. And I thought again of Jody, and of how plump she was from eating too many cakes, of the soft wad of her belly, of our thighs with no urgency interlaced, of her ugly bitten hands, of the mark on the back of her left hand, high, between forefinger and thumb . . . it looked like a small purple cyst . . . into which she drove the needle each time she fixed. "That's your c . . t, Jody," I said once, and I remember how she looked at me, softly and speculatively, drawing out the needle and watching the bead of blood form on the back of her hand, how she put that hand then to my mouth.

"Even without dollies," Tom Tear said, "I could kick it in three days."

"Sure, three days is plenty," Fay said elliptically. She clasped her hands at her knees and leaned forward towards the fire to lay her chin on them.

"I wouldn't need dollies," Tear said, leaning backwards again and closing his eyes.

"What would you do all day if you didn't have to look for a fix?" I said to him.

"You write," Fay said, glancing sideways and upwards at me. "*Cain* is great."

"For me," I said. "Not necessarily for anyone else. It's like a map, and sometimes I can read it. It's all I've got, except NOW . . . you know what I mean?"

Whether the others understood or not, I didn't know. I suspected that to some extent they did, Fay anyway. Tom probably not. Tom acted most of the time with a kind of eager anti-intelligence, like his own mad dog. But Fay was still a talented metal sculptor, though she didn't work much now. I didn't care. "Me" was something only *I* could know about. I didn't care then, for at that moment they were both with me, all three of us inviolable, under heroin.

"I want to read *Cain*," Tear said.

"Any time," I said. "I wrote it for us. It's a textbook for dope-fiends and other moles."

Fay laughed huskily into the fire.

"It's great," she said. "What's that thing you begin it with, Joe?"

I smiled with pleasure at being able to quote myself.

"If a gallows is clean," I said, "what more can a criminal expect?"

I showed Jody *Cain's Book*. Something prevented her having any response whatsoever. She said she couldn't understand it. She looked blank and shook her head.

"Nothing?" I said incredulously.

Fay had understood at once. Tom, the sentimentalist, would never understand. He rubbed his woolly head. His dog had the same woolly hair, only it was chestnut. Fay understood. "That's it," she said. "You gotta keep at it. You gotta do something. If you don't do anything it's a big drag. If only I could get a place to work!"

"Go to Mexico or back to Paris," I said. "You'd have to get out of this whole context. Here in New York you can only do as you're doing."

"You can say that again," Fay said. She added irrelevantly:

"It's no good without a pad where I can work."

There was always something irrelevant. I had heard it all before from every junkie I had ever known. Yet I hesitated to deny all validity to this kind of talk. And when someone who had not used junk spoke easily of junkies I was full of contempt. It was not simple, any kind of judgment here, and the judgments of the uninitiated tended to be final, hysterical. The rigidity of fear. No, when one pressed the bulb of the eye-dropper and watched the pale, blood-streaked liquid disappear through the nozzle and into the needle and the vein it was not, not only, a question of feeling good. It was not a question of kicks. The ritual itself, the powder in the spoon, the little ball of cotton, the matches applied, the bubbling liquid drawn up through the cotton filter into the eye-dropper, the tie round the arm to make a vein stand out, the fix often slow because a man would stand there with the needle in the vein and allow the level in the eye-dropper to waver up and down, up and down, until there was more blood than heroin in the dropper—all this was not for nothing; it was born of a respect for the whole chemistry of alienation. When a man fixed he was "turned on" almost instantaneously . . . some spoke of a flash, a tinily murmured orgasm in the bloodstream. At once, and regardless of preconditions, a man entered "Castle Keep." In "Castle Keep," and even in the face of the enemy, a man could accept the fact of being alone. I could see Fay in her fur coat walking in the city at night close to walls. At every corner a threat: the Man and his finks were everywhere. She moved like a beast full of apprehension and for the Man and the values he sought to impose on her she had the beast's unbounded contempt.

A few hundred years ago Fay would have been burned as a witch and she would have hurled curses and insults at her destroyers from the stake, the unkempt black hair alive with shock, her gleaming yellow eyes mad, and her whole face

contorted and hideous with hate to override her pain. Who knows how she may die today? Limits have been closing in; you can hang for dealings with a "minor," or rather, you can be electrocuted. Perhaps that is how Fay will die, strapped to a very old-fashioned-looking chair—it is a curious fact that the death-chair has such a quaint, old-fashioned look! —whinnying hate through purple nostrils, her outraged torso exuding blue smoke. But for the moment she is a forlorn figure slipping quickly through dark streets, desperate for a private place, for a burrow, for a "Castle Keep." There, in that low-ceilinged room, I had often said to Fay and to Tom that there was no way out but that the acceptance of this could itself be a beginning. I talked of plague, of earthquake, as being no longer contemporary, of the death of tragedy which made the diarist more than ever necessary. I exhorted them to accept, to endure, to record. As a last act of blasphemy I exhorted them to be ready to pee on the flames.

Lying on top of the bunk I must have fallen asleep about 5 A.M. I awoke less than two hours later and found myself lying with my eyes closed and a vague sense of panic at my bowels. A new day. I could hear the rain drumming at the small square window directly above my head and on the tin roof of the cabin. After a few moments I became aware that the rain had stopped.

The *Edward J. Mulroy* of New York, deck-scow, bobbed around on tide and currents, a low-slung coffin on the choppy grey water. The day was dull. The sky was low and grey-white. Tugs would come and go, hauling linked scows, like toy boats playing dominoes. They came here suddenly out of the mist which obscured Manhattan Island, hooting importantly. Leave two, take one. That went on all the time the scows lay there and there were now eleven of them strung out on wet ropes at the stakeboat. The stakeboat which provided temporary moorings for scows on their way to unloading stages in Brooklyn and Newark, N. J., was uninhabited. It was simply

an engineless hulk painted green and red and set with bollards, a winch, cleats, and a few hawsers. A painted wooden board identified it as *Bronx Stakeboat No. 2*. The stakeboat swung about its anchors with the tide. The scows stranded out behind it in three rows, like beads on a string. Somewhere, not far off but invisible, a bell clanked dully and monotonously, a Banshee wailing her dead. It came from a marking buoy which flashed at night at regular intervals, a sudden explosion of white light which seemed to hesitate before it occluded. And at night, if the mist rose, the lights on the lower end of Manhattan struck upwards out of the dark like an electric castle.

It was still early when I went out on to the catwalk. The sun was struggling to break through a low mist and the surface of the water, glassy at this hour, was vaguely tinted with colour. I counted four scows behind me, a chain of three lying directly behind the stake, and, on the far side, three brick scows piled high with red bricks and two yellow sand scows. The front scow of the centre chain was grey and red. It was one of seventeen scows of a small sea transport corporation. I sat on an upturned bucket at my stern at the port side and gazed across towards the gradually appearing Brooklyn waterfront. I had drunk three cups of coffee and smoked a marijuana cigarette. The smooth water, grey-yellow, the tilting black cones of the distant buoys, and the passing freight which moved slowly across the estuary towards the North and East rivers all contributed to the profound sense which had come over me that I was living out of time. It was cool on deck. I was waiting to catch the junkboat which came out to the moorings from time to time to buy old ropes and to sell newspapers and cigarettes.

I had already decided to visit some of the other scows to see what I could borrow or buy. But it was a bit early for that, just after 7 A.M., and the decks of all the other scows as far as I could see them were deserted. I must have thought then about what the hell I was doing.

JOHN LOGAN

On the Death of the Artist's Mother Thirty-three Years Later

"The tongue fits to the teeth and the palate by Number, pouring forth letters and words."
—AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

"Years ago I came to the conclusion that poetry too is nothing but an oral outlet."
—A. A. BRILL, M.D.

I.

My mother died because
I lived or so
I always chose to believe;
At any rate I nursed
At a violent teat with the boys
In the bronzed picture. In my
Memories of taste I find
Bits of the tart hairs
Of an Irish dog that hangs its
Red arch over me; I am
Not sure of that beast
That it has stole so much from me
As I shall suck from it:

It had an eye of milky
Glass with a very
Reddened spot that sent
Threads or streams of red
About the eye's globe
And this eye moved
Among the long red hairs
In the skull of the dog as it
Leaped in the childhood grass—

Springs in the child hood
Relics—as it arched and pulled
And arched and pulled the sheath of its livid
Tongue through the wisps of its breath.

July began with the Fourth
And the moon in a box:
A flaming house in the grass
At the edge of the fair with the frames
Of fireworks there; but now
It floats, like a carnival balloon
Throwing out bags—or men—
And turns the festival end
Of a sparkler red! Fear
Went up in a kite when it turned
My throat white as an egg
A friend once cooked in his head, mixing
Color full fluids in a shed.

Yet I was not so scared
Or scarred I could not
Scream and climb to find
My aunt and cry for help
High in the hills of bleachers:
I saw a face and told it
All my needs, but my hot
Throat beat with fright
As a strange mother bent
From the stands: her flanks were blood
In the moon and festive light
As she heard my plea of hurt and
Saw my burnt neck twitch,

Arched over me a god-like bitch.

II.

Don't think I took this dog
Too quick for mother;
I looked for another: in the book
Of art where I found the Latin
Kids at the dugs of the wolf,
But most of the stone women
Had no clothes and some of them
With help from a borrower's pen
Showed the genitals of men.
I looked for her in girls
At games and aunts who said
Her face was mine—so I tried to catch
Her in some epicene line.

I guess I looked the most
In father's wife
Whose hair was Welsh and red.
She rocked me once so ten-
Derly on her lap
As I could not lace my boot
Today I remember that—
The boy and his mother and his shoe
His wrists so thin and his hands
Fit so wrong around
The square boot-thong the work
They did or sometimes would not do
Made him weep for them.

I looked in Palgrave's book
She left, and looked
Through her pearled glass.
But did she read the verse?
And where in that still
Unpretentious town

Did turn the brass wheel
To clear the glass? How many times
I tried the German names!
And felt the foolery of gems:
Pearls like "Braes of Yarrow"
Let new Palgraves gather (and let
Me help my mother, if after

These aids she had no other).

III.

I watched at last for her
Among the sacred
Stones for I was grown
Before I found her tomb.
Today I point to that:
It's there my heavy mother
Rots. Remember!—
Of all the grades the last
Before the next is beautiful;
The lines of ribs, the grace
Of skulls, exquisite lev-
Ers of her limbs; the next is spirit
Musical with numbers of the flesh:

The formula of eyes'
Ellipse, the thrust
In the gentle eye's lash,
The figures of the listening
Fingers' nerves and of the
Fetal logarithm curves,
Of hidden colors of the guts
Of buffered tensions of the blood
'Figured in the drift of stars'
And pale Ameba's gestures—

Self-forcing numbers
Enticed into her hyaline tips,
That stop in earth; and smell

To Christ. She suffers there the natural
Turns, her nests on nests of flesh
Spelt to that irrational end
The surd and faithful Change. And stays
To gain the faultless stuff, reversed
From the numbers' trace at the Lasting Trump.
So here my mother lies. I do not
Resurrect again her restless
Ghost out of my grievous memory:
She waits the quiet hunt of saints.
Or the ignorance of citizens of hell.
And here is laid her orphan child with his
Imperfect poems and ardors, slim as sparklers.

BABY DODDS: The Oliver Band

[*The third chapter of Baby Dodds' story, as told to Larry Gara, begins in 1921, soon after he and Louis Armstrong had left Fate Marable's riverboat band. His account of his early days in New Orleans and on the riverboats appeared in the first issue of* Evergreen Review.]

I had just quit the riverboat and was in New Orleans when Joe Oliver wanted me. Although Oliver had been in the Ory band when the members walked off the stand and left me alone playing drums, he thought about sending for me when his own drummer, Minor Hall, left the outfit. Oliver was playing in San Francisco at the time and my brother John played clarinet for him. When he learned of Joe's intention John said, "No, that guy can't play enough drums. He never will play. He drinks too much." But Davey Jones, who had played with me on the riverboats, was also in the Oliver band, although he had switched from melophone to saxophone. Jones told Oliver, "If you can get that fellow, you'd better get him. Don't let him get away from you or some day you'll be sorry. That fellow is just as big a drawing card as Louis Armstrong." So Joe decided to send for me.

When I got there the first piece of music they put in front of me was *Canadian Capers*. I asked Joe how he was going to play it. He said from the left-hand corner to the right-hand corner; from top to bottom. The trio was in the middle of the number. I said, "Kick off," and Joe kicked off. I read that piece of music down, from side to side and went back to the trio. After I had played that number once I knew it, so I began playing my own style of drums. It was a jitney dance hall where everybody paid to get in the ring and dance, but people began leaving the ring to come over to the bandstand.

Some even asked who I was and where I came from. Quite naturally it made Joe Oliver feel very happy to see people leave the dance floor and stop to listen to me. Davey Jones said to Joe, "I told you so." My brother was dumfounded. He later told me, "You surprised me. How did you learn to drum like that?" I answered him, "That was my inspiration: to show you someday that I could drum. And I did."

We played for dancing at the Pergola dance hall in Frisco. The band then included Joe, who played cornet, my brother John on clarinet, Davey Jones, who played alto sax, Honoré Dutrey on trombone, Lil Hardin on piano, Jimmie Palao, who played violin, and Eddie Garland on bass fiddle. The band included a violin because we also played some theater dates.

In Frisco we had some trouble and the local union hated to take us in. We were booked at the California Theater as King Oliver's Creole Band. When the band went on for a matinee some little smart guy in the audience said, "I thought you said those guys were Creoles. These guys are no Creoles. Those are niggers!" Of the whole band only Joe Oliver and Dutrey could talk Creole fluently, so they began to speak it very fast. The people just stared and that ended that episode, but afterwards the theater was no good. Meanwhile the Pergola dance date, which was supposed to be a long booking, had also fallen through, and with it my marriage fell through.

I had been married in 1912 to a girl named Odell Johnson. We had got acquainted through her two brothers, one of whom used to like to drink with me. She also liked music and I was married to her from 1912 until 1921. She stayed in New Orleans when I left for the West Coast and after two weeks I was to send for her. Of course when the job closed down I could not send for her. When I wrote for some personal papers she answered by saying that if I had lost part of my tail out there I could stay, as far as she was concerned. So after nine years together we separated at that time.

The Oliver band stayed out on the coast about fifteen

months. After the dance hall on Market Street closed down I went with Ory and Mutt Carey. We played dances around Fresno, San Jose and Santa Cruz. Eddie Garland and I also played with the Oliver band whenever the dates didn't conflict. But we didn't call him Eddie Garland; we called him Montudie. Ory also had a good band at that time which included Ory on trombone, Wade Whaley on clarinet, and Mutt Carey on cornet. We played much the same sort of thing that Ory plays today: *Tiger Rag, Maple Leaf Rag, High Society,* and some blues.

Then Lil Hardin left the Oliver band and came back to Chicago. Then Dutrey left the band and came back to Chicago. That left only King Oliver, my brother and myself, of the group that later played together in Chicago. That's when we picked up Bertha Gonsoulin. Bertha was a very nice woman, very quiet. She had classical training, too. We started a dance hall in Oakland and did very well. We had Bertha at the door and Mutt Carey's wife played piano. We had a nice business in Oakland. I think it was only Friday and Sunday that we played. Ory was in that outfit, since Dutrey was gone. Otherwise it was the same outfit: John, Joe, Eddie Garland and myself.

In 1922 King Oliver took his band to Chicago where we played in the Lincoln Gardens. Eddie Garland, Jimmie Palao and Davey Jones stayed on in California but I went east with the rest of the Oliver band. That's where Louis joined the band. He and I had worked together on the boat, and we quit together. After he got to Chicago Joe Oliver said he'd send for Louis. Everybody wondered whether he'd let Louis play first or second. And Joe said, "It's my band. What am I going to do, playing second?" So Louis joined the band in Chicago in 1923, and played second cornet under Joe. The dance hall where we played was first called the Royal Gardens but it was later changed to Lincoln Gardens. I don't remember whether it was the Royal Gardens when I first went there or whether

the name had already been changed. It was merely a hall with benches placed around for people to sit on. There was a balcony with tables on one side and the whole interior was painted with lively, bright colors. I would judge that the Gardens held about six or seven hundred people and many a night I've seen it filled up. When it was very full there would be a lot of people on the floor but dancing was nearly impossible because they used to bump into each other, and, of course, that's not dancing. But the people came to dance. One couldn't help but dance to that band. The music was so wonderful that they had to do something, even if there was only room to bounce around.

It was a dance band that liked to play anything. We didn't choose any one number to play well. We had the sort of band that, when we played a number, we all put our hearts in it. Of course that's why we could play so well. And it wasn't work for us, in those days, to play. Nobody took the job as work. We took it as play, and we loved it. I used to hate when it was time to knock off. I would drum all night till about three o'clock, and when I went home I would dream all night of drumming. That showed I had my heart in it, and the others had the same heart that I had. We worked to make music, and we played music to make people like it. The Oliver band played for the comfort of the people. Not so they couldn't hear, or so they had to put their fingers in their ears, nothing like that. Sometimes the band played so softly you could hardly hear it, but still you knew that music was going. We played so soft that you could often hear the people's feet dancing. The music was so soothing and then when we put a little jump into it the patrons just had to dance!

In those days I used to love to drum all the numbers. But I especially enjoyed the way we played *Someday Sweetheart*. It's a number so many guys think they know but they don't play it right. It is made up of triplets and it was really beautiful. My brother John came in with the melody in the lower

register, slow and nice and easy, and the band backed him up with slow triplets. Other wonderful numbers were *Riverside Blues* and *Snake Rag*. Louis had a number called *Gully Low* and Lil's composition was *Pencil Papa*. We were all so ambitious. Somebody would suggest a number, and we would play it and experiment with different keys to see which would sound the best. Working with the Oliver band was a beautiful experience.

Dippermouth Blues was a number that the whole band worked out. Each member of the outfit contributed his own part. It was named for Louis, whom we called "Dipperbill" and "Blathermouth," but everybody had his part in composing the thing. When the number didn't have a drum part I said I would make one and I put that part of Dippermouth in. The drummers have used it ever since. They don't do it right but they do it well enough to get by with it. But the really fine thing about the number was the way we worked it out together. There was no one individual star, but everybody had to come through. It made us feel so good to know that we had done our part towards helping everybody in the outfit. And when we worked a number out and rehearsed it we always played it that way. The only time *Dippermouth* was changed was when Louis went with Fletcher Henderson and they called the number *Sugarfoot Stomp*. But it was *Dippermouth* just the same.

The Oliver band was traditional and Joe was always doing things according to the New Orleans tradition. Sometimes when the band started a number there would be one beat on the bass drum, or the piano would have a couple of notes to pick up, or even Joe on the cornet. But it wasn't more than a couple of notes. It is New Orleans tradition that when there is an introduction everybody hits that introduction. The whole band had to start together and finish together. No sloppy start or ending was permitted. We did these things correctly and that is why our band sounded so good.

Even the lineup on the bandstand was in New Orleans tradition. From left to right there was the bass, then the piano, then the clarinet, next to the clarinet was Louis on second trumpet and Joe was next to him. Next to Joe was Dutrey on trombone, and my drums were next to the trombone. The banjo was next to the piano but either a little bit in back or in front of the piano, next to the treble keys. The lineup at the Lincoln Gardens bandstand was arranged in such a way as to make the music sound better. In other words, it gave good balance and improved the sound.

Every number sounded very good and the band had a very large repertoire. We could play a four- or five-hour dance without repeating a number. Of course people usually asked for repeats on some numbers and we often had to play encores, so we didn't actually use our whole repertoire in the course of one night's work. And after we started recording we didn't have as many numbers as before because we would go over the numbers that we had recorded. This made us very familiar with them but it was not monotonous because it all sounded so beautiful.

Not all the people came to the Lincoln Gardens to dance. Some of the white musicians came to hear our band. Benny Goodman, Jess Stacy, Frank Teschemacher, Dave Tough, Bud Freeman and Ben Pollack used to come to listen. George Wettling came when he was still in knee pants. Other musicians listened but they never sat in with the Oliver band for the simple reason that it was an untouchable band. The band had everything so perfect that it was recognized as tops. We were getting fifty-five dollars a week at the time, and there were a lot of bands around that weren't getting half that. The other musicians didn't ask for tips on playing jazz music because they thought we were the type of people who wouldn't say anything or explain things. They were wrong. Everybody in the outfit would talk, but in those days they were afraid to talk with us about the music.

One of the most frequent visitors at the Gardens was Paul Whiteman. His band was playing at the Granada at Cottage Grove and Sixty-seventh. They got off before we did and every night the whole band would come rushing in there like mad. They had tuxedos on and on the cuffs of their sleeves they'd jot down different notes we played. Joe Oliver did one peculiar thing which kept a lot of them guessing. He would cut the titles off the numbers, so no one could come up and look at the number to get it for his own outfit. Sometimes they asked Joe what a certain number was called and he would say anything that came into his mind. That's how some of the numbers got different names. Fellows working in other bands would give the numbers the names which Joe gave them, and it was all wrong.

But they all admired King Oliver's style of playing. It was wonderful. You won't get another King Oliver. He very seldom played open horn. He played mostly muted. He'd put his hand over the mouth of the trumpet and it would sound like a mouth organ. We used to call him "Harmonica." That's where the wah-wah mutes came from but the others didn't know how to use them. Of course Louis Armstrong, who played second cornet in the band, used an open horn. Louis was so versatile that Joe would blow just a couple of notes while we were playing and tell Louis where the breaks would come, and they worked them right in the number. They were the only two that worked together in that way. John and Dutrey used to come along with the counterpoint or harmony to correspond. But otherwise Joe and Louis worked those things out alone.

Joe was always making suggestions for the improvement of the band. In 1923 I used very heavy sticks. One day Joe told me, "I want to try to get you to beat light," and he brought me some wire brushes. It was a new thing and I was probably the first guy that ever worked with wire brushes in this part of the country. But I still beat heavy even with the

brushes, and Joe said, "You'd beat heavy with two wet mops. Give me those things. Take your sticks back." I didn't like the brushes and couldn't get anything out of them. It seemed lazy to me. But I realized that I should learn to beat lighter with the sticks. I worked on this and began getting very technical with the drum sticks. That is why I can beat so light now with sticks. Joe Oliver was the cause of that. In those days, if you didn't do what the fellows told you to do, they were through with you. You had to do those things which would improve the outfit and the sound of the band, and that was that.

Oliver's band was the sort of group where you could use your own experiences and eventually get a chance to work them out with the outfit. I used wood blocks on my part in *Dippermouth,* but on most numbers I used the shells or rims of the drums instead. I did very little on the wood blocks, and much more on the shells. They weren't as sharp. The wood block gave a tone that was too shrill and sharp for the band. The sound of the rim was much better. It was up to me to bring out the different expressions for the outfit. If I would be drumming straight and felt that a roll would bring out an expression, I used that. Or if I were playing along and felt that beating the cymbal would help the number, I would do that. It was up to all of us to improve the band in its jazz, and I had to do my part.

It was my job to study each musician and give a different background for each instrument. When a man is playing it's up to the drummer to give him something to make him feel the music and make him work. That's the drummer's job. Those words were told to me by my teacher, Brundy, when I first started to drum. The drummer should give the music expression, shading, and the right accompaniment. It's not just to beat and make a noise. I played differently for each instrument in the band. With the piano I tried to play as soft as I could with a low press roll; not too soft, of course, but

just the right volume. I didn't use brushes because they did not give the shading to the drum tone. For my brother I would play the light cymbal on the top. And for Dutrey I would hit the cymbal the flat way, so it would ring, but not too loud. For Joe and Louis I would hit the cymbal a little harder and make it ring more.

I studied each player individually. I had to study their method of improvising and to know what they intended to do. And when the band came in as a whole, in ensemble, I had to do something different again. But at all times I heard every instrument distinctly. I knew when any of them were out of tune or playing the wrong note. I made that a distinct study. Those of us who worked with the King Oliver Band had known each other so long we felt that we were almost related. That outfit had more harmony and feeling of brotherly love than any I ever worked with. And playing music is just like having a home. If you don't have harmony with each other you don't get along. If you've got a family of ten, regardless of what goes on, if you haven't got harmony you know it's a terrible house. I feel the same thing applies to musicians. If you haven't got harmony in your band, you haven't got a good band. And everybody should do his part to the best of his ability. I've been in many an outfit where there was no harmony. In such groups a smile goes a long way. Because when you are happy and someone is glum you'll come pretty near washing that glumness out. But if a group lacks harmony, laughter and heart-gladness, you haven't got a good group.

We did a lot of kidding around in the Oliver band. Of course, Louis was the comical man in the band. My brother was serious but he had play days too. He didn't pull tricks but he often made a remark to kid the others. When he wanted to get one on me he'd say, "Oh my God, I'll bet you he's drunk!" Well, that was a big thing with me since Bill Johnson and I were the only ones in the Oliver group that drank. Sometimes we used to play around on the bandstand.

Joe had only one good eye, and one day we were throwing spitballs. John threw one at me, and Dutrey threw one at Louis, and Louis threw one at John. Some of the spitballs passed Joe so close that he could hear the whizz as they went by. Joe said, "Listen, if some of you guys hit me in my good eye, I'm going to shoot you." And then Joe took to carrying a pistol around with him. But he wasn't going to shoot anybody. One night we laughed at him and he said, "You don't believe I've got a gun, huh? You don't think I'm going to shoot you." And he opened his cornet case, and there he had a gun. Well, then things quieted down. He wasn't going to shoot anybody, but that was his way of stopping the spitball business.

Joe may have carried that gun because he was afraid of holdups, too. I do know he used to carry quite a sum of money all the time and it may have been that. I've seen the time that Joe would have four or five hundred dollars in his pocket. Only the band fellows knew that, though. There were some tough guys around Thirty-first Street, so I can see why he was afraid. But naturally we thought he was carrying the gun for us.

We were bad, not really bad, but mischievous. And we'd have a lot of fun playing music. And you can't play music anyway with a grouch. You'd better leave the grouch at home. The important part about playing music is the idea of having a happy heart and a happy mind. We had it then. People would see us, the band as a whole, laughing and joking and playing. Joe was also a great kidder. He would kid you so it would make your heart ache, but you had to laugh. He always carried the group with him and it was impossible to sit up there with a grouch.

Sometimes Louis and I used to have some special fun while playing. Louis would make something on his horn, in an afterbeat, or make it so fast that he figured I couldn't make it that fast, or he'd make it in syncopation or in Charleston time, or

anything like that for a trick. And I would come back with something on the snare drums, and with an afterbeat on the bass drum, or a roll or something. But I had to keep the bass drum going straight because of the band. I couldn't throw the band. Louis and I would throw each other and pick it up ourselves and keep the band going. They would feel it, but no one in the audience knew anything about it. Usually this was only kidding, but it has happened already when Louis and I were angry.

Once Louis and I had a regular scuffle at the Lincoln Gardens. We had been kidding and joking and when I said something the whole band would sway with me. Then Louis would say something else and the whole bunch swayed with him. One word led to another. We were kidding during the intermission period, and it got pretty hot. Then we got up to each other and clinched and scratched each other and I tore his silk shirt. We all used to wear those silk shirts then, white Japanese silk shirts. By then the whole band was interested. Some said, "I got my money on Satchmo," and others, "I got my money on Babe." It was stopped because we had to play music but our silk shirts were very ragged by then. We had to finish the night's work with those torn shirts on and everybody wanted to know what had happened. I had to tell the story about eight or nine times, the night around. But the people never knew the difference. After the little humbug that Louis and I had, we played just the same. They wouldn't know. That is one thing we had that I don't think the white musicians have. We played music and laughed and joked all the time with it, until it looked so much like fun.

But we worked very hard. I doubt if there was one person in that outfit that had a dry shirt when we got done. So that meant everybody worked pretty hard. But of course you can't play music and be angry. Because when playing music you must have a clear heart and clear mind. If you don't you can't give your best. In some groups there are misunderstandings

and some hold a malice and show it. But in the outfit that we had, this King Oliver outfit, regardless of what happened, or how angry someone was, you would never know the difference. That's the big thing about music. You can't be mad or hold a grudge and play good music. If you've got a grudge against somebody you must put it down till you've finished playing music.

In the Oliver band everybody had a good time, including the master of ceremonies, King Jones. King Jones did the announcing at the Gardens. If anything special came along he would tell about it, and he had his own way of acting. He used to dance in front of the band and he got such a kick out of it himself that the patrons enjoyed it. Sometimes he pretended to lead the band. Of course he didn't know anything about the music and it never interfered with our work. The people got a big kick out of it because they knew he didn't know what he was doing and they thought we were going along with him. But we just played our own style and paid no attention to him.

There was lots of fun in the Gardens but sometimes things got pretty rough, too. Sunday matinees were the only occasions when youngsters could get in the place, and they had many fights. Of course, it was our job to keep on playing. Even if you're on a ship and it's sinking, you've still got to play. That's one thing I don't like about music. You can't go anyplace, you've got to stay there and play. One Sunday some of the youngsters started a pistol fight on the balcony of the Gardens. We were playing when the shooting started and when the guy shot twice, Joe got up and ran. Louis got up and ran, my brother ran behind the piano and Dutrey also made haste to get away. But I just sat in my chair and played my drums. When it was over they put the guys out and carried them to jail. The others in the band thought I was a fool to stay at my drums, and when they asked me why I didn't run I answered, "Run for what? Where was I going to run? There was

no need for me to run any place." I figured that if I ran I would be subject to a stray bullet and I might even run into it. They weren't shooting at me and I thought just sitting still was as safe as anything.

Nobody was killed and I guess it was a good thing that they couldn't serve liquor or there might have been some killings there. It was prohibition but I always had plenty to drink myself. Oliver didn't drink anything, Dutrey wasn't drinking anything, and neither was my brother nor Louis. But Bill Johnson and I drank plenty. Of course we never drank so much that it interfered with our playing. And none of the Oliver musicians used dope or marijuana. That's a recent trend that doesn't even go along with music, because it makes your reaction and your nerves go dead. It's worse than whiskey. Some of the white musicians wanted me to use it. I said, "Oh, no. Get me some gin. I'll try that. Or some bourbon." In those days it was almost impossible to get whiskey even for eight dollars a pint. And when I first went with the Oliver band every girl in the place wanted to talk to me. I was pretty smooth but if a girl wouldn't buy me a pint of Old Taylor, she couldn't even talk to me. But if she bought me a pint of Old Taylor I would give her my undivided attention.

I had a lot of girl friends in those days but I also made some good friends among the band members. Dutrey was my best friend of all. He depended on me and he also felt sympathy for my drinking because in earlier days he, too, used to drink a lot. Dutrey stopped drinking because of his asthma which he contracted while in the navy during World War I. While he was on board ship he used to talk with the fellow who was on watch near the powder hold. The fellow on duty was a great talker and Dutrey would go inside the powder room and talk with him through the door so if the officers came around they wouldn't see anybody talking to the fellow on watch. One day when the fellow went off duty he forgot Dutrey was there and Dutrey went to sleep in the powder

room. The next guy that came on duty closed the door. I don't remember how many hours he stayed in there, but when they took him out he was unconscious. It gave him asthma. His tongue was as black as any shoe and eventually his asthma killed him. He used an atomizer, though, and you would never know he had any trouble. He played trombone even though there was a lot of dust in the dance hall and the damp weather around Chicago was awfully hard on his throat.

Dutrey tried to make me save money. He knew how to economize, and when he went to buy something he usually would buy two if it was a good item—whatever it was. That's what he wanted me to do. And finally he broke me into the habit. He used to call me Tiger, because he claimed that when I got angry, I had such an awful way, just like a tiger.

He was a wonderful musician as well as a swell fellow. He played very sweet trombone. He wasn't a harsh man. He didn't play bop, bop, bop; nothing like that. He played everything pretty and it always corresponded in harmony with the others. He worked with the trumpet player, he didn't work by himself. And when he played it would blend with the trumpet. Al Wynne, who studied under Dutrey, plays in a similar style, although he's much rougher than Dutrey. Dutrey was always very smooth. Preston Jackson also played similarly, but he's also playing rougher now. If a trombonist played rough Dutrey wouldn't bother with him. If a person didn't come up to standard, the oldtimers of those days wouldn't have anything to do with him. And it made the youngsters feel so bad that they'd work twice as hard, and put out more effort. And it made better musicians of them.

Music was our main interest, but of course we had other interests too. Joe Oliver, for instance, was a great eater. Oh God, how he could eat! If he came to your home, you would have to make him a galvanized bucket full of lemonade. He had stopped drinking whiskey about 1918. I don't know if it was his health or not. Then he became a great lemonade

drinker. And if you didn't have a dishpan full of biscuits for Joe you didn't have any biscuits. My brother was also a great bread eater. He could take a piece of meat about two inches around and eat up any loaf of bread. But John didn't eat so much otherwise. Joe Oliver, however, was just a big eater. If you would invite him to your house you'd better have a couple of chickens because he would eat two of them.

Many of the fellows in the Oliver band were also great sports fans. They were all baseball fans. My brother knew every baseball player from Ty Cobb's days. He and Oliver used to shoot pool, and so did Dutrey. Dutrey and John used to like to play whist. I never liked pool or cards and I imagine my life has been duller on account of that. The others liked sports of all kinds, especially racing and boxing. John got so emotional at boxing matches that sometimes, if you sat beside him, he would punch you on the nose.

But most of our life revolved around our music. When we played in the Lincoln Gardens at night we also had an evening job at a Quincy Street restaurant operated by Husk O'Hare. There we played dinner music. We played our regular band numbers, only mixed in with a few waltzes and some pop tunes of the day. It was very inconvenient for me because I had to move my entire drum set on the streetcar. When the streetcar came along I'd have to hand the drums into it, first my snare drum and then the bass drum. Quite naturally someone always saw me with that load and would help me in with the drums. It was pretty bad, especially on those cold wintry days. I never dropped anything, though, and never had the misfortune of having any busted drum head of any sort.

It was because of having to move my drums all the way across Chicago on a streetcar that I bought my first automobile. And I paid cash for it, too. No one wanted to cosign for me. The band men knew I drank all the time and they were afraid to cosign for fear they would be responsible for my death. That was around 1923. I asked King Oliver to

sign with me and he said no. So did Dutrey and Miss Major, the woman I worked for at the Gardens. Finally I asked my brother John. He said, "No, indeed. I'll never sign for you to have an automobile. You don't keep whiskey out of you long enough." Well, that was all right with me. I didn't want to use the cash I had saved up but I went down to the bottom of my trunk and dug out the money. I bought that car with cash. It was an Oldsmobile and cost me $1470.40, cash on the line.

I bought the car at Sixty-third Street and the man drove it down to the Gardens. I had never driven a car myself except one which I drove about fifteen feet into a barn when I was about nine years old. This car was painted bright red, like a fire wagon. Well, when we came out from working we all came out together. I hadn't said a thing to any of the others. I wanted it to be a surprise since they all had turned me down on the cosigning. I went up to the car and kicked the tires. I opened the doors and looked inside. Everybody noticed what I was doing and John shouted, "Hey, what are you doing with that man's car? You'll get in trouble." I answered, "I'm not afraid." Then King Oliver said to me, "Is that your car?" I said, "What do you think?" Of course Joe started to laugh and Louis, who knew it was mine, also laughed. Finally he admitted, "That's Babe's car." When I told them that I bought it with cash they really were surprised.

Then I asked, "Who's going to ride with me?" Joe Oliver said, "You'll never kill me." My brother said, "No, indeed. I've got three children." Even Dutrey said, "Well, Tiger, I'm sorry. I'm going to turn you down." Louis came out and said, "Oh, you're not going to get me in that, Pops." Finally Lil Hardin came out. She and I had been very good friends, even in San Francisco, and I said, "Well, Lil, you'll ride with me." She answered, "Sure, I'll ride with you." She wasn't a bit afraid although all the others were. I knew that she could drive a car and I admitted that I needed her help anyway.

So she got in with me and we passed the rest of the guys on the street and I honked the horn at them. After that, Dutrey, who lived in the same house with me, used to ride to work in my car. All the others wanted to know, "How does he drive?" Dutrey said I did all right. But John commented "If that guy doesn't stay off liquor, he's going to kill himself." Dutrey said, "I don't think so. Baby doesn't drink and drive."

After that Louis and Lil and I used to ride in my Oldsmobile. He was sweet on Lil but I didn't know it. Lil used to ride in front with me and Louis in the back and Louis would lean over the back seat and talk to Lil, and that's the way they got together in my car. After they were married I told them many times, "If it hadn't been for me you wouldn't be married."

In those days I got a new car nearly every year. It was easy from then on because a person who owns one car can always get another without a cosigner. But I'll bet I was in almost every jail around Chicago. The speed limit was twenty-five miles an hour but nobody drove a car twenty-five miles an hour. There weren't nearly as many cars on the streets as today and I was always going thirty. When they raised the speed limit to thirty miles an hour I always went thirty-five. Every time I turned around I was in jail. But I didn't miss work because in those days the car could be put up to bail a person out of jail.

The longest I ever stayed in jail was twenty-four hours. I never got arrested without having to pay a fine. I had an accident down on Michigan Avenue near the Drake Hotel. They had just put the lights in and the amber showed up as I approached the corner. I had no intention of stopping but the guy in front of me stopped and I didn't. Of course I hit his car in the back. I had a very pretty 1924 Buick, and this white fellow an old Ford. He and his wife were on their way to church, so oh my God, they yelled like they were half dead! Things got worse when they found out that my car was so

beautiful and that we were having such a wonderful time. Well, it was white against black and it was pretty bad, that's all. They carried me to jail and I received the same treatment in jail as if I were a criminal and had killed somebody with a gun. They got everything on me they could. They charged me with assault and battery, reckless driving, speeding, and even with carrying a dangerous weapon. All this because I hit that fellow's car. I was scared to death. I got a lawyer but he didn't say very much. It cost me almost two hundred dollars to get out of that jam. And still I stayed in jail twenty-four hours and got a record for it. The accident was on a Sunday morning and they didn't hold court until Monday morning. There were a lot of show people in my car at the time and they all went in to court for me.

I knew a lot of people through my work with the Oliver band. It was when I was playing at the Lincoln Gardens that I met my second wife, Irene. It was on Christmas Eve of 1922. She had been at Lincoln Gardens listening to the band and dancing, and was going home when I caught up with her at the corner of Indiana and Thirty-first Street. I had a lot of little toys which I had purchased for John's children. I carried them to work because I did not want to go back home before going to John's place. Well, I had my arms full of toys, and I had been drinking, so naturally I dropped one of them. We were both waiting for the streetcar and Irene picked up the toy I dropped. I could hardly stand up and she sympathized with me and helped me on the streetcar. She carried some of the toys and thought it was a very nice thing for me to carry so many toys home for my brother's children.

The band members used to kid me a lot about Irene. They called us the old folks, and they couldn't figure out how such a quiet person as Irene would take up with such a wild fellow like me. Everybody tried to shine up to her, but she wouldn't take to anybody but me. Shortly after we met on Christmas Eve we began going together and we got married in 1923.

Her first husband had died but I wasn't divorced yet so we had to wait until that went through.

Irene has been wonderful about my work in music, having to be away from home a lot. She always understood. Of course, when you're making a living for your family you have to do what the job calls for. Many homes have been broken on account of the traveling, but I figure those things would have broken anyway. Because if two people love each other they have confidence and they don't jump up and run because of that. But it's a tough part of a musician's life. It was especially hard for John because of the children. Sometimes he'd come home so tired he didn't even see his children, and he'd have to get up the next night and go to work. But Irene and I always got along wonderfully.

Those were wonderfully happy days when I was with the Oliver band. It was a shame to see that band break up. But it had to bust up and I was one of the guys mainly responsible for breaking up the outfit. I was so high strung in those days. I was only a little thing, but very high strung. And that's one of the worst things about musicians. They all have tempers. I began to suspect that Oliver was cheating on us. When I first joined the band it was called "Our Band." After we commenced recording, and making so much money, Joe said it was his band. "This is my band," he said. Well, of course, that put a different feeling in the fellows. Next the royalties on the records we made for the Gennett company got smaller and smaller. Nobody saw the royalty checks but Oliver. They were in his name and had to be cashed by him. We had an argument when some of us wanted to see the checks. Joe Oliver wouldn't come up with the checks. In our minds that showed guilt although we didn't know for sure what the real story was. I talked with the others and by the time I got through talking they all felt like I did, and we decided to disband.

It was a sad thing. I felt awful blue about seeing that band

break up. I would forget it one minute and the next minute it was right back in my mind again. It felt just like having a girl whom you like very much fall out with you. I felt as though I had lost something and a feeling of loneliness came over me. That's the way I felt when I left the Oliver outfit. It seemed as though something was missing from my life. It was pretty bad for a while.

King Oliver, of course, organized another band right away. He went on the road for a time and I think he played in New York. Then he returned to Chicago to play at the Plantation. He had a very good band. My brother was in it for a while and he had a fellow named Clifford Jones on drums. They called him "Snags" because he had some teeth missing. He was a very good drummer, a left-hand, trick drummer who threw his drum sticks in the air. It was very sensational because Joe had never had that type of drummer before. When he had me I was a straight drummer, although I had used my shimmy beat with the Oliver outfit occasionally.

I only played with King Oliver on one other occasion. It was around 1925 when Oliver was at the Plantation. Paul Barbarin, his drummer, took sick, and Oliver wanted to know if I would work in Paul's place. I had no regular job at the time but I knew that was pretty stiff and didn't know whether I could do it or not. I told Joe I didn't think I could and he said, "Oh, yes, you can. You can do anything." So I got up my courage and went over to play the floor show. That was tough to go in and play the show when I had not rehearsed it with the others. Nobody knew I was a strange drummer until the finale of the first show. There was a place that called for four measures on the cowbells, and I missed those four measures. It changed the tempo and the girls who were dancing couldn't change the tempo in their routine. That's when they knew I was strange to the band. After that I had no more trouble though I only played in Paul's place for one night. Oliver had a big band of sixteen pieces at the time. He had

Barney Bigard and Albert Nicholas on clarinets, Darnell Howard played violin, clarinet and sax, Ory on trombone, Bud Scott on guitar, and a fellow by the name of Bert Cobb on bass. Instead of Louis on second trumpet he had Bob Shoffner. He was a nice trumpet man, too. During the course of the evening we played some of the same numbers that we used to play with the smaller band in the Gardens. To me it didn't have the same meaning, but it sounded all right for a big band.

Years later, in 1935, Oliver came through Chicago again. He had a bunch of youngsters down South somewhere and he was planning a tour of Memphis and the lower South. He wasn't quite satisfied with the drummer and he wanted me with the outfit. I was never so surprised in my life. At the time I was playing with John's group at the New Plantation and I turned him down flat. He had a good-sized outfit and I would have enjoyed working with him, and would have been happy to do all I could for the youngsters, and perhaps help Joe too. But I was playing with my brother and didn't think it would make sense to leave his outfit.

It really is a shame, though, that Oliver never got to Europe. That's where his band would really have been appreciated. In fact, the bands that are playing jazz in France today are trying to have the sort of band that King Oliver had in the early days. They use the same instrumentation: two trumpets, trombone, clarinet, bass viol, and banjo. In addition they may use a piano. And it sounds very good, in my estimation. It certainly would have been a great thing, though, if King Oliver had gone to Europe before he died.

EUGÈNE IONESCO: There Is No Avant-garde Theater

What does "avant-garde theater" mean? An enormous confusion, deliberate or not, has been created, largely by various prejudices, around these words. The expression itself is confusing; perhaps the "absurdity" of this theater is absurd only as a matter of definition. In a country where my plays happened to be performed, one critic—moreover, a critic favorably disposed towards them—wondered if such a theater was not, after all, merely a transition, a phase. That is one definition of avant-garde: a theater preparing the way for another, definitive one. Yet nothing is ever really definitive, everything is a transition—life itself is essentially transitional. The culmination of one thing is also the harbinger of another. Hence it can be said that the plays of the *grand siècle* break ground for the romantic drama (which, besides, is not worth much in France) and that Corneille and Racine are the avant-garde of the plays of Victor Hugo, who himself is the avant-garde of the dramatists who supplanted him.

Furthermore, the mechanism of these positions and appositions is much more complicated than simple-minded dialecticians may imagine. There are productive avant-gardes which result from a deliberate ignorance of the work of previous generations, others which are facilitated—even made possible—by a return to sources, to ancient and forgotten works. Shakespeare is still much more immediate than Victor Hugo; Pirandello far more avant-garde than Roger Ferdinand; Büchner infinitely more vital, more poignant than, for example, Brecht and his Parisian imitators.

This is how the matter appears when considered more exactly: the avant-garde does not exist; or rather, it is altogether different from what it is thought to be.

Being, of course, revolutionary, the avant-garde constitutes

—has always constituted, like most revolutionary events—a restoration, a return. Change is only apparent: this "appearance" however is tremendously important, for it permits (by means of what is "new") the revival and re-establishment of what is timeless and permanent. Political upheavals, for example, which occur when the structure of an exhausted and "liberalized" regime has sagged to the point of imminent collapse, prepare the way for—even favor—reconstruction, reaffirmation of the social structure according to an archetypal pattern: change occurs, of course, in personnel, in superficial conditions, in terminology; things which in essence are identical assume other names without the slightest modification of their basic reality. What has happened? Merely this: slackened authority reaffirms itself, "order" is re-established, tyranny extinguishes human liberties, the managers recover their taste, their vocation for power—and with good conscience, feeling themselves invested with another "grace of God," or the alibi of an ideological justification all the more effective because of the cynicism inherent in the exercise of power. Thus the fundamental social hierarchy is clearly re-established, reconstituted, with the king (political bosses) supported by the dogmas of the church (ideologists, writers, artists, journalists, propagandists—all obedient once more) and accepted or obeyed by the majority—the people (believers, fervent or passive), who no longer know how to rebel.

As for artistic revolutions, almost the same phenomenon occurs in an avant-garde experiment as in a genuine revolution. The avant-garde appears *of necessity*, so to speak; it is self-generated when certain systems of expression are exhausted, corrupt, too remote from a forgotten model. Hence contemporary painters have been able to *rediscover*, in what are called primitive works, the pure and permanent forms, the fundamental elements of their art. And this rediscovery, necessitated by an art history in which the archetypal forms had deteriorated, has been made thanks to an art, a *language* derived

from *extra*-historical societies.

It is actually this interrelation of historical and nonhistorical, of timely and timeless, that reveals the common, inalterable substance which can also be discovered, instinctively, within the self: without it, no work has any value; it is the ultimate nutrition of all art. I would not hesitate to say that the genuinely revolutionary or avant-garde art, by boldly opposing its own times, reveals itself as (quite literally) *out of date*. In thus revealing itself it recovers the universal quality I have mentioned, and being universal, can be regarded as *classical*. For example: Beckett's *Endgame*, a dramatic work called avant-garde, is much closer to the lamentations of Job, the tragedies of Sophocles and Shakespeare, than our shoddy "*théâtre engagé*" and our contemporary commercial theater. The *up-to-date* theater does not last (by definition), and the reason it does not last is that men are not genuinely—profoundly—interested in it.

It is equally important to note that social metamorphoses do not always tally with artistic revolutions. Or rather, when the revolutionary *mystique* becomes a regime, it turns to outmoded artistic forms, forms (hence a mentality) of the past: the "new realism" adopts the intellectual clichés once considered bourgeois and reactionary. All official art is the same —one pomposity encounters another: the academic mustachioed portraits of the last revolution do not differ—stylistically—from the academic portraits, with or without mustaches, of the bourgeois epoch that failed to understand Cézanne. One can therefore say, perhaps paradoxically, that it is history which becomes dated, nonhistory that remains timely.

Chekhov's theater offers us the spectacle of men dying with a certain society; the waste and loss, within the eroding action of time, of the men of a certain period. Proust's novels perform the same function, and Flaubert's *L'Éducation Sentimentale*, this last with a society on the make rather than in decline

as a background for the characters. Yet it is not the collapse or the disarticulation of a society which is the principle theme of these works, but the *using-up* of man in time, his collapse within a certain span of history, a loss nevertheless true for all history: we all are killed by time.

I distrust the pacifist plays which prove that war is the downfall of humanity and that we die only because of war. This is what one young critic, commenting on Brecht's *Mother Courage* with dogmatic obstinacy, seems to be saying.

That we die more than ever in time of war is a truth of our time. That we die is an eternal truth, one which concerns us all, i.e., even those of us who do not fight wars. Beckett's *Endgame* is truer, more universal than Schéhadé's *Histoire de Vasco* (which does not, of course, prevent this last work from being the remarkable play it is).

Since "what concerns us all fundamentally" is, oddly enough, less accessible at first glance than what concerns only some of us or than what concerns us frivolously, it is obvious that avant-garde works—whose object is (if I may be excused for insisting upon it so heavily) to rediscover the timeless truth and to reintegrate it with what is of our time—cannot be understood, when they first appear, by the majority of the public. They are therefore not popular. This is in no way to their discredit. The poet discovers obvious realities only in his solitude, his silence. The philosopher too discovers his truths in the silence of the library, and these truths are not readily communicated: how much time was needed before Marx himself was understood; can *everybody*, even now, understand him? He is not popular. How many people have been able to assimilate Einstein? The fact that only a handful of men have been able to comprehend the theories of modern physics does not make me doubt their truth, and yet this newly discovered truth is neither invention nor subjective vision, but an objective reality, one outside of time—eternal—to which the scientific mind has only recently acceded. We

can never do anything with immutable truth but approach it, forsake it, try to approach it again.

There is also, since we should be speaking of the theater, a language of the theater, a theatrical rhetoric, ground to be broken in order to accede to objective realities: and this ground to be broken (or to be recovered) is just what is required in the theater for those realities which cannot reveal themselves in any other way than theatrically. It is what we ordinarily call laboratory work.

Why not create a popular theater (what is *the people* if not the majority of the public, the nonspecialists), a commercial theater, a propagandist theater, an edifying theater, a theater of conventional language: a theater of vulgarization? For that matter, there is nothing to prevent the creation of another theater: a research theater, a laboratory theater, an avant-garde theater. If such a theater is not supported by a large audience, this in no way indicates it is not one of the mind's absolute necessities, with the same qualifications as any other artistic, literary, or scientific research. We do not always know *what it might be good for*—but since it answers to a spiritual requirement it is actually *indispensable*. If this theater has an audience of fifty people a night (and it can have such an audience) its necessity is demonstrated. This theater is in danger. On all sides politics, apathy, jealousy, malice threaten—with real dangers, unfortunately—Beckett, Vauthier, Genet, Schéhadé, Weingarten, and still others, along with their defenders.

—Translated by Richard Howard

JACK KEROUAC: Seattle Burlesque

I WALK IN JUST IN TIME, to see the first dancer.

Aw, they've got little Sis Merriday up there, girl from across the bay, she oughtnt be dancing in no burlesque, when she shows her breasts (which are perfect) nobody's interested because she aint thrown out no otay hipwork—she's too clean—the audience in the dark theater, upsidedown, want a dirty girl—And dirty girl's in back getting upsidedown ready before her stagedoor mirror—

The drapes fade back, Essie the dancer goes, I take a sip of wine in the dark theater, and out come the two clowns in a sudden bright light of the stage.

The show is on.

Abe has a hat, long suspenders, keeps pulling at them, a crazy face, you can see he likes girls, and he keeps smacking his lips and he's an old Seattle ghost—Slim, his straight man, is handsome curlyhaired pornographic hero type you see in dirty postcards giving it to the girl—

ABE Where the hell you been?
SLIM Back there countin the money.
ABE What the hell d'you mean, money—

SLIM I've been down at the graveyard.
ABE What were you doin there?
SLIM Burying a stiff.

and such jokes—They go through immense routines on the stage before everybody, the curtains are simple, it's simple theater—Everbody gets engrossed in their troubles—Here comes a girl walking across the stage—Abe's been drinkin out of the bottle meanwhile, he's been tricking Slim into emptying the bottle—Everybody, actors and audience, stare

at the girl that comes out and strolls—The stroll is a work of art—And her answers better be juicy—

They bring her out, the Spanish dancing girl, Lolita from Spain, long black hair and dark eyes and wild castanets and she starts stripping, casting her garments aside with an 'Ole!' and a shake of her head and showing teeth, everybody eats in her cream shoulders and cream legs and she whirls around the castanet and comes down with her fingers slowly to her cinch and undoes the whole skirt, underneath's a pretty sequined virginity belt, with spangles, she jams around and dances and stomps and lowers her haid-hair to the floor and the organist (Slim) (who jumps in the pit for the dancers) is wailing tremendous Wild Bill jazz—I'm beating with my feet and hands, it's jazz and great!—that Lolita goes slumming around then ends up at the side-drape revealing her breast-bras but wont take them off, she vanishes offstage Spanish—She's my favorite girl so far—I drink her a toast in the dark.

The lights go bright again and out come Abe & Slim again.

"What ya been doin out in the graveyard?" says the Judge, Slim, behind his desk, with gavel, and Abe's on trial—

"I've been out there burying a stiff."

"You know that's against the law."

"Not in Seattle," says Abe, pointing at Lolita—

And Lolita, with a charming Spanish accent, says "He was the stiff and I was the undertaker" and the way she says that, with a little whip of her ass, it kills everybody and the theater is plunged into dark with everybody laughing including me and a big Negro man behind me who yells enthusiastically and claps at everything great—

Out comes a middleaged Negro dancer to do us a hotfoot tapdance, hoof, but he's so old and so puffing he cant finish up and the music tries to ride him (Slim on the Organ) but the big Negro man behind me yells out "Oh ya, Oh ya" (as if to say, 'Awright go home')—But the dancer makes a

desperate dancing panting speech and I pray for him to make good, I feel sympathetic, here he is just in from Frisco with a new job and he's gotta make good somehow, I applaud enthusiastically when he goes off—

It's a great human drama being presented before my all-knowing desolation eyes—upsidedown—

Let the drapes open more—

"An now," announces Slim at the mike, "presenting Seattle's own redhead KITTY O'GRADY" and here she comes, Slim leaps to the Organ, and she's tall and got green eyes and red hair and minces around—

(O Everett Massacres where was I?)

Pretty Miss O'Grady, I can see her basinettes—Have seen them and will see her someday in Baltimore leaning in a redbrick window, by a flowerpot, with mascara and her hair masqueraded in shampoo permanent—I'll see her, have seen her, the beauty spot on her cheek, my father's seen the Ziegfield Beauties come down the line, 'Aint you an old follies girl?' asks W. C. Fields of the 300-pound waitress in the Thirties Luncheonette—and she says, looking at his nose, 'There's something awfully big about you,' and turns away, and he looks at her behind, says, 'Somethin awfully big about you too'—I'll have seen her, in the window, by the roses, beauty spot and dust, and old stage diplomas, and backdoors, in the scene that the world was made out to present—Old Playbills, alleys, Shubert's in the dust, poems about graveyard Corso—Me'n old Filipino'll pee in that alley, and Porto Rico New York will fall down, at night—Jesus will appear on July 20, 1957, 2:30 P.M.—I'll have seen pretty pert Miss O'Grady mincing dainty on a stage, to amuse the paying customers, as obedient as a kitty—I think "There she is, Slim's broad—that's his girl—he brings her flowers to the dressingroom, he serves her"—

No, she tries as hard to be naughty but caint, goes off show-

ing her breasts (that take up a whistle) and then Abe and Slim, in bright light, put on a little play with her.

Abe is the judge, desk, gavel, bang! They've arrested Slim for being indecent. They bring him in with Miss O'Grady.

"What's he done indecent?"

"Aint what he's done, he *is* indecent."

"Why."

"Show him, Slim."

Slim, in bathrobe, turns his back to the audience and opens his flaps—

Abe stares and leans almost falling from the judge desk—"Great day in the morning, it cant be! Who ever saw a thing like that? Mister, are you sure that's all yours? It's not only indecent it aint *right*!" And so on, guffaws, music, darkness, spotlight, Slim says triumphant:

"And *now*—the Naughty Girl—*Sarina*!"

And jumps to the organ, ragdown jazz drag, and here comes naughty Sarina—There's a furor of excitement throughout the theater—She has slanted cat's eyes and a wicked face—cute like a cat's moustache—like a little witch—no broom—she comes slinking and bumping out to the beat.

Sarina the fair-haired
bright
Bedawnzing girl

She immediately gets down on the floor in the coitus position and starts throwing a fit at heaven with her loinsies—She twists in pain, her face is distorted, teeth, hair falls, shoulders squirm and snake—She stays on the floor on her two hands supporting and knocks her works right at the audience of dark men, some of em college boys—Whistles! The organ music is lowdown sex-down-there what-you-doin down there blues—

How really naughty she is with her eyes, slant blank, and

the way she goes to the righthand box and does secret dirty things for the dignitaries and producers in there, showing some portion of her body and saying "Yes? No?"—and sweeping away and coming around again and now her hand-tip sneaks to her belt and she slowly undoes her skirt with tantalizing fingers that snake and hesitate, then she reveals a thigh, a higher thigh, a pelvic corner, a belly corner, she turns and reveals a buttock corner, she lolls her tongue out—she's sweating juice at every pore—I cant help thinkin what Slim does to her in the dressingroom—

By this time I'm drunk, drank too much wine, I'm dizzy and the whole dark theater of the world swirls around, it's all insane and I remember vaguely from the mountains it's upsidedown and wow, sneer, sleer, snake, slake of sex, what are people doing in audience seats in this crashing magician's void handclapping and howling to music and a girl?—What are all these curtains and drapes for, and masques? and lights of different intensity playing everywhere from everywhere, rose, pink, heart-sad, boy-blue, girl-green, Spanish-cape black and black-black? Ugh, ow, I dont know what to do, Sarina the Naughty One is now on her back on the stage slowly moving her sweet loins at some imaginary God-Man in the sky giving her the eternal works—and pretty soon we'll have pregnant balloons and cast off rubbers in the alley and sperm in the stars and soon walls'll be built to hold her *protect* inside some castle Spain Madkinghouse and the walls will be cemented in with broken beer glasses and nobody can climb to her snatch except the Sultan Organ who'll bear witness to her juices then go to his juiceless grave and her grave be juiceless too in time, after the first black juices the worms love so, then dust, atoms of dust, whether as atoms of dust or as great universes of thighs and vaginas and penises what will it matter, it's all a Heaven Ship—the whole world is roaring right there in that theater and just beyond I see files of sorrowing humanity wailing by candle light and Jesus on

the Cross and Buddha sitting neath the Bo Tree and Mohammed in a cave and the serpent and the sun held high and all Akkadian-Sumerian antiquities and early seaboats carrying courtesan Helens away to the bash final war and broken glass of tiny infinity till nothing's there but white snowy light permeating everywhere, throughout the darkness and sun—pling, and electromagnetic gravitational ecstasy passing through without a word or sign and not even passing through and not even being—

But O Sarina come with me to my bed of woes, let me love you gently in the night, long time, we got all night, till dawn, till Juliet's rising sun and Romeo's vial sink, till I have slaked my thirst of Samsara at your portal rosy petal lips and left saviour juice in your rosy flesh garden to melt and dry and ululate another baby for the void, come sweet Sarina in my naughty arms, be dirty in my clean milk, and I'll detest the defecate I leave in your milky empowered cyst-&-vulva chamber, your cloacan clara file-hool through which slowly drool the hall-gyzm, to castles in your hassel flesh and I'll protect your trembling thighs against my heart and kiss your lips and cheeks and hair and love you everywhere and that'll be that—

At the drape she parts her bra and shows the naughty teats and vanishes inside and show's over—lights come on—everybody leaves—I sit there sipping my last possible shot, dizzy and crazy.

It dont make no sense, the world is too magical, I better go back to my rock.

In the toilet I yell at a Filipino cook, "Aint those beautiful girls, hey? Aint they?" and he loth to admit it admits it to the yelling bum at the urinal—I go back, upstairs, to sit out the movie for the next show, maybe next time Sarina'll fly everything off and we'll see and feel the infinite love—But my God the movies they show! Sawmills, dust, smoke, gray pictures of logs splashing in water, men with tin hats wandering around

a gray rainy void and the announcer: "The proud tradition of the Northwest—" then followed by color pictures of water skiers, I cant make it, I leave the show by the side left exit, drunk—

Just as I hit the outside night air of Seattle, on a hill, by redbrick neons of the stagedoor, here come Abe and Slim and the colored tapdancer hurrying and sweating up the street for the next show, even on an ordinary street the tapdancer cant make it without puffing—I realize he has asthma or some serious heart defect, shouldnt be dancing and hustling —Slim looks strange and ordinary on the street and I realize it's not him's making it with Sarina, it's some producer in the box, some sugar candy—Poor Slim—And Abe the clown of Eternity Drapes, there he is talking as ever and yakking with big interested face in the actual streets of life, and I see all three of them as *troupers,* vaudevilleans, sad, sad—Around the corner for a quick drink or maybe gulp a meal and hurry back for the next show—Making a living—Just like my father, your father, all fathers, working and making a living in the dark sad earth—

I look up, there are the stars, just the same, desolation, and the angels below who dont know they're angels—

And Sarina will die—

And I will die, and you will die, and we all will die, and even the stars will fade out one after another in time.

ARTHUR ADAMOV: As We Were *

The Characters:

A.
THE MOTHER
THE AUNT

[*Although the stage is lit as if by daylight, a lamp is on as the curtain rises. Stage right: a bed on which A., dressed in evening clothes, is sleeping. Next to the bed a wicker chair, and on the chair an alarm clock. In a corner, a violin.*

The Mother enters; she is about fifty years old, her hair gray, and her dress, shoes, and stockings all black. The Mother cautiously approaches the bed and watches A., who stirs lightly in his sleep. She hesitates a moment, steps back, and in doing so brushes against the chair, almost loses her balance, and knocks over the clock. As it hits the floor, A. starts involuntarily and awakens.]

MOTHER [*picking up the clock and putting it back on the chair*]: I'm terribly sorry, sir, please forgive me. I didn't mean to disturb you—it was careless of me. I'll come back later. I'm a little worried, you see, but quite . . .

A. [*sitting bolt upright*]: Did you ring? I didn't hear you. I must have fallen asleep. [*He looks at the alarm clock.*] Is that the right time?

MOTHER: I think so. [*Pause.*] I'm terribly sorry. I really didn't mean . . .

A.: There's nothing to be sorry about. On the contrary, you've

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done me a good turn. If you hadn't come in . . .

MOTHER [*smiling*]: . . . So unexpectedly . . .

A. [*getting up*]: I would have been late, and then . . . then I —well, I'd rather not think about that. [*Pause.*] There's really nothing worse than a nap in the middle of the day. When you wake up, you don't know *where* you are.

MOTHER: When you're tired you have to sleep.

A.: No, not like this. Not sleeping with the light on and with all your clothes on. That's not a good thing to do.

MOTHER: But sometimes it can't be helped—when you're traveling, for instance.

A.: Yes, but I'm not traveling—not so far as I know, anyway. This is where I live; I'm in my own room.

MOTHER: I know you are—and it was rude of me to walk in on you. [*Laughing a little*:] I'm sorry to have troubled you, but you see, I wanted to ask if you might not have seen my little boy.

A.: Your little boy?

MOTHER: Yes. I'm looking for him.

A.: But I've never even set eyes on him. I wouldn't have the slightest idea what he looks like. Besides, I don't understand why you . . .

MOTHER: . . . Why I thought he might be in here? Well, you see, he was playing with his ball out in the hallway just now. You'd have heard him if you weren't such a sound sleeper. Some people are lucky enough to be able to sleep like that. I wish I could, but I never . . .

A.: I still don't understand.

MOTHER: There's really nothing to understand, you know. The door was wide open, and I said to myself that his ball might have rolled in here, and my little André right after it.

A. [*sitting on the bed*]: And even supposing the door was open, as you say, and supposing the ball did roll in here, is that any reason to think your little boy might have come in here, or if he did, that he stayed?

MOTHER: Any reason? Why yes, to talk to you—to ask you questions about things. He asks questions all day long—and I don't always know the answers. But I still do better than his father did—he was really no help at all.

A.: Oh! Your husband is no longer with you?

MOTHER [*indicating her clothes*]: As you can see, I still wear mourning for him. [*Pause.*] Of course, I'm not saying André didn't love his father . . .

A. [*abruptly*]: I'm sorry, madam, but I haven't seen your child.

MOTHER: Of course you haven't seen him—if he came in while you were asleep.

A.: And left right away—that's possible, of course.

MOTHER: Left? Why do you say that? He might be hiding somewhere right here in this room. [*Laughing:*] In some dark corner. [*She glances around the room.*] He loves to hide like that . . . so you'll come and look for him . . . and find him. . . . He's a naughty little boy, my André! But that's the way they all are at his age, isn't it? [*She sits down on the bed.*]

A.: How old is he?

MOTHER: Nine. But he seems much older—he's very precocious, you know, and that's just what worries me. Precocious children are so sensitive. And André's always getting sick. He has a terrible time keeping anything on his stomach.

A.: Well, you have to watch his diet, that's all.

MOTHER: Yes, I do. But it's so complicated. Especially when you travel a good deal, the way we do. Fortunately the chef on the diner is a good friend of ours, and he knows how to boil potatoes just the way André likes them. He's such a nice man.

[*The Aunt enters from stage left. She is about sixty, small and wizened, and dressed entirely in black. She is carrying a piece of embroidery-work and a package tied up with rib-*

bon. Her stockings are loose, almost falling.]

AUNT [*to the Mother, with a shrill, self-deprecating voice*]: It's only me! Can I come in? Only Aunt Julie. I was so lonely, so dull up there in my little room, and when I heard your voice, Henriette, I said to myself, "I'll go down and gossip a little." [*Pause.*] I've brought a present—for the little angel. I won't tell what it is though—it's a surprise! May I sit down?

A.: I'm sorry, but I'm rather in a hurry . . .

MOTHER: Surely you have a moment or two.

AUNT: Just a few moments. I'll leave with Henriette right away. Won't we, Henriette? [*She sits down in the chair.*]

A.: You must forgive me, but I have to go out now myself. [*He begins to walk back and forth.*] My time is not my own. It might not seem that way, of course. [*Turning to the Mother:*] You came in and found me fast asleep in broad daylight, and naturally you thought, "Now there's someone who has time on his hands—time to burn." But that's not the case. No, I have a great many things to do, many obligations . . . [*He breaks off.*]

MOTHER: Tell us about them.

AUNT [*stretching out her neck*]: Oh yes, tell us all about them, please. I love hearing about things. . . . I'll just make myself as small as I can, right here, and listen with all my might. [*She takes up her embroidery and begins work on it.*] I've always enjoyed listening, haven't I, Henriette? I've always liked having people tell me things.

MOTHER: You've always liked having people pay a lot of attention to you, if that's what you mean.

AUNT: I'm afraid you're right, Henriette. But it's only because people never *have* paid much attention to me. It's been different for you.

MOTHER [*turning to A.*]: Then you have a busy schedule?

A.: Of course I have a busy schedule. [*Abruptly:*] What does that mean? Do I earn my living? Well, not quite yet. But

there's nothing so unusual about that. At the moment, there's no great need. . . . And I'm not going to rush into just anything merely for the sake of doing something . . . just to prove that I exist, as they say.

MOTHER: Then your family must have left you an income?

A. [*walking again*]: Oh, enough so that I can hold out for a while. It won't last long, but I'm determined not to wait until the last minute before I can establish myself independently.

MOTHER [*smiling*]: I see.

A.: I'm not sure you do. You'd have to know me better to understand. . . .

MOTHER: Well, naturally.

A.: Yes, you'd have to know me much better to understand all the difficulties I've been exposed to. For some people it's all so simple. No questions asked. They manage to keep on going. They pick up papers, open doors, put the papers down, open other doors, and still have a hand free for this person, for that person . . . [*almost shouting*] but I can't! I can't!

MOTHER: And it does you credit.

A.: I suppose so. But it can't go on this way forever. Something must be done!

AUNT [*without lifting her eyes from her work*]: That's right. You have to do something on this earth. Don't you think so, Henriette?

A. [*continuing*]: And that's why I've decided to change my way of life, as you can see. This very day . . .

MOTHER: This very day?

A.: I'm getting married. Tonight.

MOTHER: I might have guessed. [*Indicating A.'s suit.*] From your clothes, I mean.

A.: Oh yes, I thought it would be a good idea to get dressed beforehand. Otherwise I might never get there on time. Even so, I can't afford to waste time. [*He walks up and*

down again.]

AUNT: You've known your fiancée a long time, I suppose. I always say you never can know each other too well before you get married. I'm an old woman, sir, and believe me, I've seen a lot of marriages ruined in my time.

A. [*continuing*]: And the church is all the way across town, on the other side of the lake. I'll have to take the bus, transfer to another one, and even then I'll have to walk quite a long way. There really was no reason to insist on our being married all the way over there. Why did she choose that church? There are a lot of others, and much nearer too. Of course, she lives over there, and she's supposed to get married in that parish. But you'd think something could have been worked out—the rules aren't so strict as all that. It's just a case of making the right arrangements in advance.

MOTHER: Yes, but there's always something extra you have to do these days. It's so exhausting, isn't it? Especially if you're not very strong, if you're sensitive . . .

A.: I hope you don't think I'm just lazy!

MOTHER: Of course not. I know you're not lazy. [*She stands up.*] I'm not even sure what the word means. It's really a question of temperament. For instance, when they tell me my little André is lazy, I simply don't believe it.

AUNT: Lazy? André? He's just the opposite. Always running about, hurrying somewhere—a real little squirrel!

MOTHER: I don't think grades at school prove very much. André doesn't always get very good grades, you know—but considering his health! And the life he's had, poor darling! Put yourself in his place.

A. [*approaching the Mother, fiercely*]: I think he's probably already waiting for you in your apartment.

MOTHER: Oh no, the door is locked and he doesn't have a key. And if he couldn't get in he'd certainly go on over to Julie's.

AUNT: He comes to see me every day—he never misses a chance.

MOTHER [*confidentially, to A.*]: And you should hear how he talks to me about it afterwards. I tell you, we've laughed over it together for hours! [*A. suddenly draws back. The Mother sits down again and continues in her normal voice:*] And anyway, I'd have heard him going up the stairs. [*A. stops where he is, his face in his hands.*]

AUNT: I'm always terrified he's going to fall downstairs. [*Turning to A.*] Do you know what he does? He puts his little hands over his eyes so he can't see, and then he *rushes* down the stairs, just like that—so fast!

MOTHER [*laughing*]: He does it to frighten us! [*A. abruptly lifts his face from his hands and walks over to the Mother and the Aunt.*] I'm sorry, I've taken your place. [*She stands up.*]

A.: It doesn't matter.

MOTHER [*sitting down again*]: You're very kind.

AUNT: You know, Henriette, my hands aren't shaking at all today. I can manage the needle quite easily, the way I used to when I was a girl. [*Turning her head toward A.*] You see, sir, I've always worked for my living. Sewing—always sewing! Oh, if only my poor little brother were here! [*The Mother begins to tap her foot.*] He would come in and kiss me, and then he would play his violin. [*A. gives a start.*] I would go on sewing, but I'd be listening, and admiring him so! That music—you know, it doesn't bother you when you're working. It helps, somehow—it spurs you on.

MOTHER: So you think his music spurred you on, do you?

AUNT: To think he even sold his violin rather than tell you . . .

MOTHER: Rather than tell me what? [*She turns toward A. and indicates the Aunt while tapping her forehead.*]

AUNT [*standing up, still holding her embroidery*]: I can't help it, Henriette. Every time I think of Louis I feel this way.

I know it's wrong—he must be giving his own concerts by now [*holding up a finger*] on high! The whole day long! [*Turning toward the Mother.*] Yes, with no one to nag at him. "You're wasting your time, why don't you go out and make some money!" [*Suddenly noticing the violin*:] Oh, you have a violin too! You play the violin! What a wonderful surprise. Think of it, Henriette, he plays the violin!

MOTHER [*laughing*]: Why don't you ask him to play you something. Go on!

A. [*approaching the Aunt, fiercely*]: You're mistaken. [*Turning to the Mother.*] Both of you. I've never played the violin. I've never played any instrument at all. It's purely by chance . . .

AUNT: Oh well, then . . . [*She sits down again and goes on with her work. The Mother laughs.*]

A. [*turning to the Mother*]: Yes, it's purely by chance that this violin happens to be here, in my room. Someone left it here. He was trying to sell it, but since he couldn't find anyone to take it off his hands, he left it here for the time being. . . .

AUNT: In your care. He trusted you with it!

MOTHER: I suppose a violin isn't the easiest thing in the world to sell, is it?

A.: It's like anything else. [*He walks up and down.*] No harder, no easier. No matter what you have to sell, it's always a gamble. I know what I'm talking about. I tried just the other day to sell an old ring that . . .

MOTHER: . . . That your parents left you?

A.: It was an extremely fine sapphire. And would you believe it, they didn't offer me even a quarter of its value. Always some pretext or other—first it was the stone, then the setting—always something wrong!

MOTHER: And so you didn't sell it. [*Pause.*] I'm sure you won't regret it, someday.

A.: No, on the contrary, I'm quite pleased—I should have

been rather sorry to part with it—especially for such a ridiculous price. Nevertheless, at the time, I needed the money very badly.

AUNT: You see, Henriette, it wasn't only Louis. This gentleman too . . . [*A. suddenly stops where he is, listening intently.*] How you reproached that husband of yours! As though he were the only poor man in the whole world!

MOTHER: I was thinking of André, poor little darling. All alone on that big staircase!

AUNT: That was your fault, too. All your fault! You could have gone yourself and left André where he was, in his little bed.

MOTHER [*appealing to A.*]: You must think we're dreadfully rude old women to be quarreling like this in front of you. [*To the Aunt*:] We'll have to explain . . .

AUNT: Yes, it's the least we can do.

MOTHER: I'll try my best. [*To A.*:] Please sit down. [*A. hesitates, then sits down at the foot of the bed, not far from the Mother.*] Oh, come a little closer! [*She leans toward A., indicating the Aunt, who continues her embroidery.*] She's hard of hearing, you know, but not so much as she pretends to be, and I'd prefer that she didn't hear what I have to say. If she thinks I'm talking about her, well, *let* her—I'm used to it. Whenever I talk to André she practically has a fit. [*The Mother takes A.'s arm and forces him to sit closer to her.*] There. Like that—we'll be more comfortable this way. [*The Aunt, still holding her sewing, gets up and sits down at the foot of the bed where A. has just been sitting. The Mother makes a mock-despairing gesture, as if to say, "What can you do?", and continues, her back entirely turned on the Aunt.*] My husband always had a passion for gambling.

AUNT: That's not true, Henriette! Not always. It began after he met you. After he married you!

MOTHER [*continuing imperturbably*]: He squandered almost

all the money we had. If we're where we are today, I can assure you it's all on acount of his obsession. As far as I'm concerned, it wouldn't have mattered—not to me! But I have André too: I have to give him a good education, and leave him a little something for later on, if I can. [*A. grows agitated.*] I'm telling you all this because I know you'll understand me. After what you've just told us . . .

A. [*leaping up*]: I've told you nothing! Nothing at all! And I don't see what could. . . . Oh yes, the money my parents left me. But it was so little . . .

MOTHER: All right. Let's get back to André. [*A. stands in front of the Mother and the Aunt, listening intently as she continues.*] We used to spend our summers at a resort that was very popular at the time I speak of, largely because of a gambling casino that is no longer operating. Well, I hardly need to tell you that my husband was a regular client of this establishment.

AUNT: Only because you made life so impossible for him at home. Why, he wasn't even allowed to play his violin after ten o'clock at night!

MOTHER: He had sold his violin long before. [*Turning to A., in a low voice:*] She has her dates all mixed up—she's getting to that age, you know. [*Pause.*] Well then, every evening, as I was saying, my husband went to the casino. He spent a good half the night there, and you can imagine which half I mean . . . [*Pause.*] And I—waited for him at home. I couldn't fall asleep. And sometimes I would go and wake up André, and ask the boy to go get his father.

AUNT: *Every night* she would wake up that boy, that poor little angel. "André darling, go get your Papa for me and bring him home, bring him home to Mama." [*A., who has been listening with great interest, sits down quite naturally between the two old women.*] And try as I would, arguing with her, begging her to leave the boy in peace and go herself, it was always Julie who had to button up his little

coat for him and send him off!

MOTHER: And of course the poor little thing would come home alone and tell me what had happened.

A. [*in a toneless voice*]: Children are not allowed in casinos. There was a porter at the foot of the stairs.

MOTHER: But he was stubborn, my little André! And, to make a long story short, the porter finally had to go in himself and get little André's father for him.

A.: It took forever. The porter didn't come back for hours. People were coming in and out, going up and down the stairs.

MOTHER: Was André afraid?

A.: Terribly afraid, until he saw his father at the top of the great staircase.

AUNT: But then he ran up to him—so happy, so reassured! [*The Mother begins to laugh.*]

A.: Yes, he was happy, and now he could tell all his troubles, looking straight into his father's little dead eyes.

MOTHER: And what did his father say then?

A.: Nothing. He just repeated over and over, "Go tell your Mama that I'm winning now and that I'll be home . . . in half an hour."

MOTHER: Poor little thing! What dreadful errands he had to run!

A.: Oh, he had his reward later. No sooner was he back at home than they made such a fuss over him! Fondled him, pampered him, gave him hot milk.

AUNT: I heated it up myself!

MOTHER [*in A.'s ear*]: To hear her tell it, you'd think she did everything. [*Laughing*:] Next thing you know she'll have you thinking she *carried* him for nine months!

AUNT [*folding up her embroidery on which, to tell the truth, she has been working quite inattentively*]: That will *do* for this afternoon. I'll work on it some more tonight—in bed! [*Pause.*] All the same, I must show you the little

present. [*She unwraps her package and takes out a child's locomotive.*] There! Isn't that a beauty? A real engine!

MOTHER: Wonderful. It looks like it must have been a bargain.

AUNT [*getting down on all fours and winding up the little train*]: Look! All you have to do is wind it up, and it goes by itself. . . . Without stopping. Until it runs down.

MOTHER [*putting her arm on A.'s shoulder; they stand up at the same moment*]: Yes, it really runs remarkably well.

A. [*crouching over the train*]: It certainly runs well.

MOTHER [*sitting down on the bed again in the same place*]: That's the kind of toy I like best. Maybe because I like real trains so much too. We've spent so much of our life traveling. [*A. suddenly straightens up.*]

A.: Well, I'm sorry for you, then. As far as I'm concerned, I can't think of anything more . . . [*he begins walking again*] disagreeable than continually traveling from place to place. You get to one city and you're still full of memories of the place you've just left. You walk down a street, and it reminds you of other streets, streets you saw the day before, or even that same day! It's the kind of thing . . . I avoid as much as I can!

MOTHER: You remind me of my husband. He didn't like trains much either, though he spent a good half of his life as a traveling salesman. [*Pause.*] You'd think he almost had a premonition. . . . [*A. stops for a minute, then begins to walk back and forth again.*] Do stand still a minute—you're making me dizzy! [*A. continues to walk. The Mother stands up, takes him by the hand, and sits down with him on the bed. The Aunt is still on all fours in front of them, playing with the train.*] Well, one summer day, when I was sick, my husband forced André to take a long walk in the country with him. Of course André would rather have stayed with me, but his father *insisted.*

I was in bed, you see, so I was really helpless. They left, the two of them, and I *made* myself get up and watch them from the window, I remember looking after them, watching them getting smaller and smaller. André was walking a little behind his father.

A. [*in a toneless voice*]: At first they had nothing to say to each other. And then, not far from the level-crossing, the father suddenly stopped and began to shout [*A. stands up, shouting*:] "Why did you have to tell her everything? Why did you? What business was it of yours? If your mother hadn't heard, she wouldn't have gossiped about it with her friends, and no one would have been the wiser. I could have gotten the money somewhere! You can always get money to pay a gambling debt!" [*in the voice of a child*:] "I didn't do it on purpose. Mama made me tell!" [*shouting again*:] "That doesn't make any difference. All because of you I'm a ruined man—compromised! Bankrupt!"

MOTHER: And he walked off, after saying such things to André?

A.: No. He asked to be forgiven for losing his temper. "André, my little boy, don't be angry with me." It was after that that he went away.

MOTHER: And André let him go. And that's why he can't forgive himself, even now, poor little thing. As if he could have known that his father would lie down on the tracks . . . . that a train would be coming through at just that moment.

A.: He should have known! All he had to do was to look at his father to see it!

MOTHER: But what can I say for myself, after all. I leave my little André alone so much of the time. I shouldn't do it, not any more. Not that I'm worried that something—something like that would happen again, but the minute you leave that child alone he gets himself all dirty. Especially his hands. And when you're traveling. . . . [*A. steps*

back, away from the Mother, his back to audience.]

MOTHER [*continuing*]: The trains are aways so dirty—it's the smoke. [*She gets up suddenly and approaches A.*] Look at yourself! [*She pushes his head down roughly.*]

A. [*looking at his rumpled suit*]: Yes, I'm dirty, all right. I don't know why.

MOTHER: And your face! Your face is just filthy! [*Calling to the Aunt*:] Julie! bring a towel. [*The Aunt, who has remained on all fours playing with the train, gets up, but stands where she is, confused.*] To the right! at the back! You know perfectly well where it is! It hasn't moved! [*The Aunt gets a towel and brings it to the Mother, then resumes her place and her posture, winding up the little train and disengaging it whenever it runs into anything and gets stuck.*]

MOTHER [*rubbing A.'s face, which of course is not the least bit dirty*]: It looks to me like soot!

A. [*tonelessly*]: Like soot? Why should it look like soot?

MOTHER: You know perfectly well why. [*Laughing*:] And you know perfectly well where my little boy is, too. All dirty, and . . . so tired.

A. [*as tonelessly as before*]: So tired that he lies down on his little bed fully dressed in broad daylight.

MOTHER [*sitting down where she was before and taking A. on her knees. A. relaxes completely*]: But we take his clothes off [*she removes his jacket as she speaks*] and we put him into bed. [*She slips A. onto the bed, carefully.*] It's his own Mama who puts him into bed, who sends him beddy-bye. [*She pulls the blanket up over him.*] Because he's so tired from playing ball in the hallway. [*Leaning over A., in a singsong voice*:] See the little ball, rolling down the hall, rolling, rolling, rolling, rolling, rolling . . .

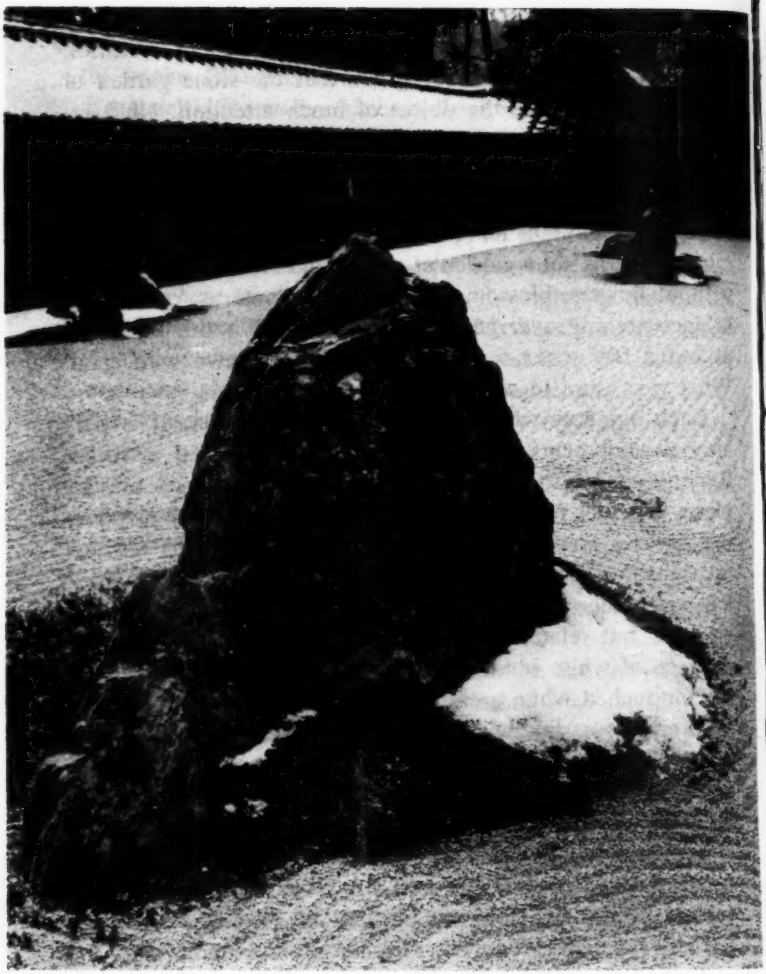
[*And the curtain falls while the Mother murmurs these last words and while the Aunt, still on all fours, watches the train rolling. . . .*]

WILL PETERSEN: Stone Garden

Although it has been there for over four and a half centuries, it is only within the last few years that the stone garden of Ryōanji has become the object of much attention. Until recently, few persons were aware of its existence or had reason to be interested in it. Our concepts of art provided us with no means to approach it. Even those with a special interest in Japanese gardens let it lie in obscurity. It was, in fact, by our definitions not a garden at all. Devoid of "oriental" charm, without flowers, blossoming trees, stone lanterns, or delicate bridges arching over goldfish ponds, it had nothing to offer us but a few rocks scattered on an area strewn with sand. What was there to see?

Each age sees what it is prepared to discover. It is only after developments in our own traditions prepared us to see Ryōanji garden that we have come to respect it as a masterpiece. Whether regarded as a garden, or as sculpture or painting, we are now impressed by the perfection of its abstract relationships. Its reduction to essentials enables us to achieve a deeper understanding of principles underlying not only other gardens, but related forms of expression as well. The clean expanse of white sand evokes innumerable associations with the untouched white areas of *sumi* painting and calligraphy, *shoji* and floors laid with *tatami*; in more subtle fashion, with aspects of music, *haiku* poetry, and Nō dance. By becoming aware of the thought and interrelationships behind the various art forms, we are no longer fascinated by merely isolated elements. Our eyes do not see the ornateness and profuse decoration which overwhelmed Art Nouveau, nor are we as excited by the rich color which fired the Post-Impressionists. For us, Japanese art means simplicity, black and white.

Texture and other elements are important in the Ryōanji garden, but the greatest impact is that of simplicity and vacant space. The garden consists simply of fifteen rocks—of various sizes and shapes, but of no odd or particularly unusual quality



Stone garden of Ryōanji, photograph by Sano, Kyoto.

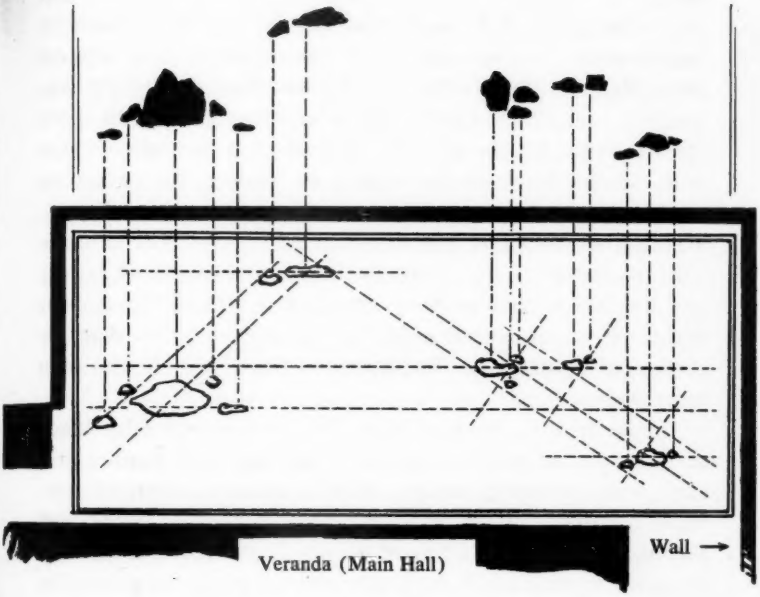


Diagram of stone arrangement with projection in silhouette
(Adapted from Kuck: *The Art of Japanese Gardens.*)

—composed in five groups of 5-2-3-2-3 on a flat, rectangular area of carefully raked white sand, about the size of a tennis court. Except for a little moss at the base of each rock, serving to soften the transition between rock and sand, nothing grows in the garden.

Although attributed to the famed artist Sōami, the actual designer is unknown. It is relevant to mention, however, that in gardening, as well as in other arts of the time, Buddhist monks were the chief artists and leaders in aesthetic expression. With the introduction of Zen doctrines during the Kamakura era (1150-1310) the principles of religion were applied to the traditional rules of landscape garden composition. At this time several important treatises on gardening were written, based on prevailing religious-philosophical ideas. The application of religious principles became still stronger with the ascendency of Kyoto as the cultural capital of Japan, and reached a high point in the gardens of the Muromachi period. It was during this period, perhaps in 1499, that the garden of Ryōanji (a Buddhist temple of the Rinzai Zen sect) was laid out.

Generally it is included in the flat *kare-sansui* (dry landscape) style, in which white sand is an important feature and often serves to depict water, which is entirely absent.[1] Sometimes a white wall, backing the arrangement of rocks and shrubs, carries up the white of the sand to establish a visually flat plane against which the landscape, following the principles of *sumi* painting, is composed. At other times a background is "borrowed" from distant scenery. In each instance the aim is not the creation of an imitation or miniature world, as decadent examples would lead us to assume, but to translate the elements of nature into comprehensible form—into art. By various means, without trace of artificiality, within the most intimate or limited space infinities could be realized. These gardens are designed to be experienced from a pre-

[1] See: Shigemori, *Gardens of Japan*, Kyoto, 1949, for discussion of *kare-sansui* types and development, and early uses of sand.

scribed vantage point, much in the same way as a painting is seen. Although the viewer does not physically enter the garden, his subjective response compels him to enter in thought, and to assume the same relationship to the scene as the tiny figures discerned in landscape paintings.

Ryōanji garden, too, has but a single vantage point. Enclosed on three sides by a low earthen wall, it can be viewed only from the veranda of the temple, extending along the fourth side. This single vantage point, together with the tranquility of the location in the hills outside of Kyoto, suggests the garden's purpose as an object of contemplation; not, however, of the transitoriness of life which occupied those of an earlier time. For, with no blossoms to fade and no leaves to wither and fall, the garden is not dependent on the impermanence of momentary beauty. Its beauty is that of the qualities of rock and sand, and of their abstract relationships. The garden, like all things, is not unchanging. But what significant changes do occur, occur not within the garden, but in the mind of the viewer and in his perception of the garden.

The vacant space of the garden, like silence, absorbs the mind, frees it of petty detail, and serves as a visual guide—a means for penetrating through the "realm of multitudes." A relationship between this vacant space and that of *sumi* painting has already been noted. There is a relationship with calligraphy as well. Including its translations into silence and stillness, vacant space, or emptiness, is the basis of an aesthetic underlying many forms of Japanese expression.

Yet, while noting the vacant space, the rocks cannot be ignored. Like sand and its attributes, rocks constitute a basic element in the Japanese aesthetic; these, and other components, help create within the garden a complex of interwoven associations. It is possible to bring to this apparently simple garden the endless fine points of gardening, compounded with a wealth of religious, mythological or intellectual ideas and historical relevances accumulated over the centuries. Any discussion of the garden of Ryōanji is in peril

if it fails to account for all of these! For example, it was customary to name stones individually after Buddhist figures and to assign them certain prescribed positions. In these compositions a triangular grouping, or a group of three stones, often referred to a Buddhist triad. Relationships of vertical and horizontal, round and flat rocks were based on philosophic, as well as aesthetic, considerations. Principles of *Yang-Yin* are also evident. There are echoes, too, of the Mt. Sumeru *world mountain* theme, common in earlier periods. Most commonly, however, the rocks of Ryōanji are said to depict rocks in a river or, on another scale, islands in the sea. More scholarly interpretations refer to the Zen parable of *tora-no-ko watashi* (Crossing of the Tiger Cubs), a title often given to the garden. Other interpretations liken the rocks to the sixteen *arhats,* another story in Zen.[2]

Most explanations of the garden are based primarily on the rocks—as forms, figures, objects or shapes. The sand is usually left unexplained. When explained, the sand, serving as vacant space, is referred to as a depiction of void. The question arises: if it is maintained that the garden is voidness translated into sand, why would not a rectangle of sand alone express this concept? Why the rocks? And why their careful choice and arrangement, if we are to grasp a sense of emptiness?

It is at this point that we come to one of the basic paradoxes of Buddhist thought: Only through form can we realize emptiness. Emptiness is thus considered not as a concept reached by the analytical process of reasoning, but as a statement of intuition or perception: "a fact of experience as much as the straightness of a bamboo and the redness of a flower."[3]

From this "fact of experience" is derived the principle of *sumi* painting. The blank sheet of paper is perceived only as paper, and remains as paper. Only by filling the paper does it

[2] All fifteen rocks cannot be seen at one time; perhaps suggesting that the senses cannot grasp all of reality from any one viewpoint.

[3] Suzuki, *Zen Buddhism and Its Influence on Japanese Culture* (Kyoto, 1938), 1938), p. 32.

become empty. Much in the same way the sound of the frog plopping into the still pond creates the silence in Bassho's well-known *haiku*. The sound gives form to the silence—the emptiness. In the Nō play it is through voice and instrument that we are aware of profound silence; elaborately colorful costumes create simplicity and bareness; and in the dance, movement creates stillness, and stillness becomes movement.

Emptiness, expressed as vacant space in visual art, silence in music, time and spatial ellipses in poetry or literature, or non-movement in dance, requires aesthetic form for its creation and comprehension. As stated above, the idea of emptiness is not a concept reached by analytical reasoning, but one that must be perceived in aesthetic terms. Aesthetic form is pre-requisite to conceptual perception. Thus, unless the frog leaps within a well-constructed poem the sound produces no silence. Unless the persimmons are completely realized, perfectly composed and executed, they will lie only on white paper—a charming vignette at best, with no meaning to the untouched areas. Unless the Nō movements are faultless there will be awareness only of slow-movement, not of non-movement. And without the most careful choice and arrangement of rocks the sand of Ryōanji becomes incomprehensible.

The composition of rocks within each group, and of the rock groups with each other and with the surrounding space, is one of the supreme achievements of art.[4] Not one stone could be added, eliminated, or altered in position without destroying the composition and, consequently, its meaning.[5] Yet, it may be asked: Why five groups? Why fifteen rocks? Would not one interesting group, or a single well-shaped rock, allow for an even greater expanse of sand, and therefore heighten the perception of emptiness? Conceptually, yes. Perceptually, no.

Perceptually, the single rock or rock group becomes the

[4] For an excellent analysis of the composition see: Kuck, *The Art of Japanese Gardens* (New York, 1940), pp. 153-56.

[5] This destruction of relationships is strikingly revealed in an old photograph (*Historical Gardens of Kyoto*, Kyoto, 1910), in which tufts of grass and moss are growing on the unkempt and unraked sand.

"center of interest" and focuses the attention—holding it if, as sculpture, it is interesting; or failing to hold it, if it is not. Free-standing sculpture demands or repels our interest, but visually does not affect the space around it. Thought is concentrated and fixed on the form and its inevitable literary or emotional associations. If the surrounding space is considered, the tendency is in terms of duality: of positive and negative.[6]

Two rock groups would set up two such focal points, creating a spatial tension between them, but still unrelated to that space, which remains meaningless. Three groups form a common aesthetic and conceptual solution which is almost universal. The establishment of asymmetry and variation allows for varied and complex philosophic and aesthetic manipulation. This triangular structure is an integral part of the Ryōanji garden composition.[7] Limited to this solution, however, the emphasis remains upon the triad; attention remains on the form. To go beyond the level of literal symbolism, to penetrate deeper, to fully realize the vacant space, a further step must be taken. To achieve the "perfect mutual solution" of form and vacant space, the relationship must be such that the mind does not dwell on either form or vacant space, but flows freely between both, and includes both. Thus, the arrangement into five groups is a solution of subtlety and complexity, creating infinite compositional shifts and visual movements, which prevent stoppage or fixation and relate the rock and sand as an inseparable unit. Form is arranged in vacant space in such a way that we perceive emptiness as form, and form as emptiness.

The basic idea of emptiness, translated into aesthetic terms by various perceptible means, does not mean, in philosophic terms, emptiness in the sense that there was something before and nothing now. To illustrate, by returning to visual expres-

[6] It is worth noting that the Zen Buddhists, emphasizing concepts of void, did not use sculpture as a major expression.

[7] An analysis of the garden's triangular compositions may be found in Drexler, *Architecture of Japan* (New York, 1955), p. 180.

sion, the emptiness of Ryōanji garden is not the emptiness of Surrealist paintings like those of Dali, Tanguy, or de Chirico, which evoke a mood, a planned response, and the yearning to be filled. In a de Chirico we think of man, for man is suggested by various forms, shapes and objects identified with man. The emptiness is that of desertion. Man is implied, but is not present, and the resultant sensation is one of longing and loneliness. The vacant space of Ryōanji does not evoke a mood of loneliness; it is free of emotional associations. It arouses no thoughts of the absence of man, or of anything connected with human life; nor does it evoke the need to be filled.

In the paintings of Surrealists space (actually a receding plane) extends endlessly away from the viewer (by means of lines of perspective) and does not return, but meets the equally endless space of sky at a far horizon. Tanguy's rocklike forms, depicted as distinct, separate forms, are set on the surface of this "endless empty space." The basis of the visual concept is the isolation of form in space, and of the separation of the two. By symbolic association: man lost in infinity.

This comparison may help us to understand the spatial concept of the stone garden, for it differs from the above both aesthetically and philosophically.

Aesthetically, or in terms of composition, the sand is strictly confined, with its four borders sharply delineated. (It may be argued that Tanguy's "endless space" is also sharply confined: by the horizon line at the top, and by the picture frame on the sides and at the bottom. However, the viewer is expected to assume that the space begins from the viewer, before the picture plane, and that it extends back beyond the horizon into infinity; the horizon does not mark the end, but merely serves as a device of perspective.) In viewing the garden, the eye is deliberately kept within the rectangle; there is no illusionary device to carry the vision beyond. In addition to being limited horizontally, the space is further controlled by the low earthen wall, which seems to create a shallow "box" and

thereby limits the space vertically as well. The space of Ryōanji garden is not one of vastness, but of introspection.

In this spatial structure, the rocks are not standing freely —set as isolated forms, independent and in opposition, or suggestive of lonely individuality—but are buried substantially in the ground. Some of the smaller rocks are, in fact, almost completely submerged, with their top surfaces barely above ground level. The proper burial of rocks is given great consideration in Japanese gardening, so that the effect is somewhat similar to icebergs, in which the revealed portion implies greater force and mass than is apparent. This also strengthens the relationship between rocks and sand. The rocks are not so much forms placed on the surface from above as bumps pushing up from below—bumps pushing into space.[8]

Closer to Ryōanji garden conceptions is the sculpture of Giacometti, whose thin skeletal figures rise from large solid blocks. The figures in themselves are not especially noteworthy; like the rocks, they exist to give form to the surrounding space. The space given form by Giacometti's figures is enormous. Yet, despite the affinity, the philosophic difference is evident in the conceptual dualism of form and vacant space. Giacometti's figure is man, lonely and isolated within "nothingness." It is the man of Existentialism *thrown into* the void: the concept of nothingness that stands apart, separate, and beside man—the nothingness of despair.

Restated: The *sunyata* of Buddhism is not the emptiness of absence, it is not a nothing existing beside a something, it is not a separate existence, nor does it mean extinction. It is always with individual objects, always co-existent with form, and where there is no form there is no emptiness. "Form is emptiness, and emptiness is form." Beneath these ideas is the

[8] During a recent visit it was noted that too much moss had been allowed to grow at the base of the rocks. Although subtle, the difference in the quantity and length of the moss was enough to upset the stone-sand relationships and to lessen the over-all impact of the garden. The moss had formed five bright green islands. The rocks no longer seemed to be coming up from the sand, but sat mountain-like upon the islands, which were almost "pretty" in appearance. The moss itself resembled lush forests in miniature.

Buddhist conception of an object or form as an event, and not as a thing or substance.[9]

In declaring that the garden represents islands in the sea, etc., as is most commonly done, is to be held by form. To say, on the other hand, in more abstract terms, that the sand represents void, is to ignore the rock. All of these are merely equations in which the garden represents X, the unknown, and X is merely substituted. Regarded as a puzzle, the garden offers no solutions, but presents new questions to meet each answer.

If all great art operates on many levels all interpretations are valid—if we realize that all are inadequate. For all explanations are, in fact, no explanations. Iconography alone does not make art religious, although it may add to its ramifications, scope, and depth. It is admittedly useless and futile, as has been done in this paper, to speak of *sunyata*, emptiness, voidness—for as soon as we abstract from the garden as *art*, we lose it. All verbalizations are self-limiting and block perception. Ultimately the garden must be viewed as art, and viewed in silence. As a silent sermon it raises many questions, but asks for no answers. It calls to mind the flower held before his disciples by the silent Buddha, which brought forth no classification, description, analysis, or discussion, but only the comprehending smile of the clear-seeing.

Like all great art, the garden is perhaps a "visual *koan*." It remains in the mind, and, if it can be likened to anything, rather than "islands in the sea," it is the mind. It does not matter, therefore, what materials the garden is composed of; what is important is the mind that interprets the essentials. The garden exists within ourselves; what we see in the rectangular enclosure is, in short, what we are.

[*Note*: *The writer wishes to express his indebtedness to Mr. Shindo Tsuji, Kyoto sculptor, for suggesting some of the views expressed in this paper.*]

[9] Suzuki, *Essence of Buddhism* (London, 1947), p. 42.

ROBIN BLASER: Poem

O dark haven. This chaos
of my ears.
Men cry out.

O chimney-sweep whom Blake
saw conquered.
I have done nothing to ring out.

No sleep.
Unwritten poems
in humdrum wonder at such pain

is here in Boston streets. Winter
blossoms. Soot specks the snow.
The salted ice is black with shapes
reaching out.
Lost Nijinski
followed for a guide unhurried drops of blood
in his hallucinated snow.

Recognized, the poor
who wear such multicolor—
all stolen goods,
attachments of the flesh, as leaves—
walk crisply in my frozen arms.

JOHN HICKEY: Break Your Mother's Back

Step on a crack,
And break your mother's back.

He stepped on every crack.

—Thunder and lightning, fire and brimstone, witches and cauldrons, rub-a-dub-dub three men in a tub, Mother Goose on the loose, voodoo magic in a house of marble.—

Reaching the corner, he turned and started back again.

—For it's a long, long way to Tipperary. I'd walk a mile for a mammal.—

This time he stopped at the foot of the steps in front of the middle column.

—Go, go in, go in in sin.—

Six great columns of white marble stretched their thin roundness into the air.

—We dedicate this beautiful structure of marble and gold to the glory of God.—

He stared at the middle column.

—Phallic symbols, stately and serene, how does your garden grow?—

It was cold, but he was sweating. The back of his neck began to ache from staring at the top of the column. He put his foot on the first step.

—Excelsior! Goddamit, now we are six.

Yes, Sister, I'm all ready. No, I'm not scared. Yes, I know what it means. Soon the body and blood of Christ will be in my heart. The priest is God's mind and heart on earth. He can forgive me my sins.—

His feet were heavy as he climbed the marble steps. At the heavy iron doors of the church he stopped and stared at the carvings in the metal.

—The soul is like a milk bottle. Just as the milk bottle is filled with milk, the soul is filled with grace. Therefore, grace must be white. Seven years ago. Now the milk has turned to ink. If you float a soul in ink, does it sink?—

He opened the door and the dead, incense-filled air filled his nostrils. Stepping into the candlelight gloom, he waited a second to let his eyes adjust to the darkness. Then he walked to the marble font that held the Holy Water.

—Yellow water, color of. . . . Blasphemous mind, will you be quiet. Also looks like sweat. Little droplets just like mother used to make. Sweat sizzles on the stove. Mother was a merry old soul, a merry old soul was she. She called for her strife, she called for her foal, and she called for her piddlers three. Piddler number three, that was me.

> *Daniel, you read too much. It warps your mind. You should read the scriptures. There is more wisdom in the scriptures than in all that trash you read. And you must go to confession this week, it's been a month.*

Piddler number three, that was me.—

The church was peaceful with its afternoon quiet. Daniel slid into the last pew, and leaned his elbows on the hard wooden back of the pew in front of him.

—Now I lay me down to creep, and if I should lie before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to cremate. Ashes, ashes, who wants a soul of ashes! Remember the words of the scriptures. Ashes to ashes and dust to dust. Bust to bust and lust to lust. The seat of wisdom is in the groin. Blasphemous mind, will you be still—

A priest came out of the sanctuary. His hands were clasped tightly about his office. His face was serene as he started to pace up and down the middle aisle of the church. His lips moved as he prayed. Two young girls came into the church. Each had a white handkerchief covering her head.

—Symbol of purity. Handkerchief of white, guard well this innocence all through the night. But the handkerchief failed, for the maiden was assailed. She dropped her pretty little white . . .

The priest still paced the middle aisle. His robes swished and whispered in the great empty cavern. He looked neither to the right nor to the left, but continued to move his lips.

—Serenity of a different sort. Results from conversation with angels. I have found the way. A greater life awaits me. Living in the eyes of God, merciful, sympathetic God. Notice my life, I have not even taken a wife. Down with women. Eve had relations with a snake. Seductive Eve, how do you make a snake? And the snake was Adam? Phallic symbol, how does your garden grow?—

The two girls sat in a pew a few rows in front of him. Their heads were bent in suppliant prayer.

—A woman's a two-faced, a worrisome thing that'll bring you the Muse in the night. There are five Muses, how do I choose? Venus was a mother. She was an old lady who lived in a pew, and she had so many children she didn't know what to do. Actually she only had five. Muse number one, two, three, four and five. Spit from the loins of desire. And the art of love rose higher and higher.—

The priest stopped next to Daniel's pew and opened his office.

—The good book says Venus was no lady. Love is shady. Down with women. And then came Katy. Katy knew her mother. That shady old lady who lived in a pew. Katy, why did I spend the night with you?—

The priest stepped silently into the confessional and the two girls rose. Each went into a different side of the confessional box.

—Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. Relations with a snake. And the merciful God gave them the gate. Member dat rainy ebenin' I threw you out wit' nottin' but a fine tooth

comb. They tasted of the forbidden fruit. An apple a day keeps the angels away.—

He heard the sliding partition snap closed, and the first girl came out of the confessional. Her head was bowed and she looked supremely humble. It was Daniel's turn.

—Daniel into the Lion's den.—

He rose slowly from his seat and walked to the confessional. It was only a moment before he was kneeling. He could hear the mumbling of the girl on the other side.

—The Prodigal Son was never my favorite story.—

The priest's voice was weary. Daniel's voice sounded hollow and far away.

"Bless me, Father, for I have sinned."

"How long has it been since your last confession, my son?"

"Years and years and years."

"What sins do you remember, my son?"

"Lust."

"Are you repentant, my son?"

"No!"

He sprang out of the small compartment and ran to the front door of the church. Using all his force, he threw it open, and stood on the top step above the street.

—Repent, ye sinners. Find the way. Why worry about repentance? Tomorrow is another day. Katy, you were no lady. Why should you be? The garden is in full bloom, and I am free.—

PAUL BLACKBURN: Song for a Cool Departure

When the track rises
the wires sink to the fields
Trees absorb them in and blot them out:
black running
pencil lines against the fields' green
Shrubbery close to the track goes by
so fast it hurts the eyes

Rain has quit
We have arrived
at Salut or Castelnaudary

A woman laughs harshly in the corridor
The soldiers on either side sleep beautifully
peacefully, one
with his mouth open
The other has his closed
The world is certainly diverse!
Wires begin again to
fall and rise
Small fruit trees stand in quadrangles
in a field otherwise planted
The brook tries to escape notice
and where shall I put 2
cypresses,
3 elms?

Old woman in the corner
wrestles her rented pillows and cannot sleep
One finally arranges itself
under her right arm, the other

entirely out of control, she clutches
on her lap, the comfortable weight,
her rented buffers against a hard world
and stares direct in front of her and cannot sleep

My wife holds her face up for a kiss
Brow puckered and tired, she also cannot quite sleep,
worrying about a pair of sunglasses we
left at someone's house yesterday
in the round of farewells

Having left that town
we have left nothing behind

The world is surely diverse enough
and if the information is sound, one
could ride forever and never fall off
let others sleep—
I am so wide-awake I want to sing, while
the wheels turn, the windows clatter, the door
jogs, the wires
rise and change and fall
and the green grass grows all round, all round
and the green grass grows all round—

LAWRENCE FERLINGHETTI: Horn on "HOWL"

Fahrenheit 451, the temperature at which books burn, has finally been determined not to be the prevailing temperature at San Francisco, though the police still would be all too happy to make it hot for you. On October 3 last, Judge Clayton Horn of Municipal Court brought in a 39-page opinion finding Shigeyoshi Murao and myself not guilty of publishing or selling obscene writings, to wit Allen Ginsberg's *HOWL and Other Poems* and issue 11&12 of *The Miscellaneous Man*.

Thus ended one of the most irresponsible and callous police actions to be perpetrated west of the Rockies, not counting the treatment accorded Indians and Japanese.

When William Carlos Williams, in his Introduction to *HOWL*, said that Ginsberg had come up with "an arresting poem" he hardly knew what he was saying. The first edition of *HOWL*, Number Four in the Pocket Poets Series, was printed in England by Villiers, passed thru Customs without incident, and was published at the City Lights bookstore here in the fall of 1956. Part of a second printing was stopped by Customs on March 25, 1957, not long after an earlier issue of *The Miscellaneous Man* (published in Berkeley by William Margolis) had been seized coming from the same printer. Section 305 of the Tariff Act of 1930 was cited. The San Francisco *Chronicle* (which alone among the local press put up a real howl about censorship) reported, in part:

Collector of Customs Chester MacPhee continued his campaign yesterday to keep what he considers obscene literature away from the children of the Bay Area. He confiscated 520 copies of a paperbound volume of poetry entitled *HOWL and Other Poems*. . . . "The words and the sense of the writing is obscene," MacPhee declared. "You wouldn't want your children to come across it."

On April 3 the American Civil Liberties Union (to which I had submitted the manuscript of *HOWL* before it went to the printer) informed Mr. MacPhee that it would contest the legality of the seizure, since it did not consider the book obscene. We announced in the meantime that an entirely new edition of *HOWL* was being printed within the United States, thereby removing it from Customs jurisdiction. No changes were made in the original text, and a photo-offset edition was placed on sale at City Lights bookstore and distributed nationally while the Customs continued to sit on the copies from Britain.

On May 19, book editor William Hogan of the San Francisco *Chronicle* gave his Sunday column to an article by myself, defending *HOWL* (I recommended a medal be made for Collector MacPhee, since his action was already rendering the book famous. But the police were soon to take over this advertising account and do a much better job—10,000 copies of *HOWL* were in print by the time they finished with it.) In defense of *HOWL* I said I thought it to be "the most significant single long poem to be published in this country since World War II, perhaps since T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*." To which many added "Alas." Fair enough, considering the barren, polished poetry and well-mannered verse which had dominated many of the major poetry publications during the past decade or so, not to mention some of the "fashionable incoherence" which has passed for poetry in many of the smaller, avant-garde magazines and little presses. *HOWL* commits many poetic sins; but it was time. And it would be very interesting to hear from critics who can name another single long poem published in this country since the War which is as significant of its time and place and generation. (A reviewer in the *Atlantic Monthly* recently wrote that *HOWL* may well turn out to be *The Waste Land* of the younger generation.) The central part of my article said:

. . . It is not the poet but what he observes which is revealed as obscene. The great obscene wastes of *HOWL* are the sad wastes of the mechanized world, lost among atom bombs and insane nationalisms. . . . Ginsberg chooses to walk on the wild side of this world, along with Nelson Algren, Henry Miller, Kenneth Rexroth, Kenneth Patchen, not to mention some great American dead, mostly in the tradition of philosophical anarchism. . . . Ginsberg wrote his own best defense of *HOWL* in another poem called "America." Here he asks:

"What sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open their skulls and ate up their brains and imagination?
Moloch! Solitude! Filth! Ugliness! Ashcans and unobtainable dollars! Children screaming under the stairways!
Boys sobbing in armies! Old men weeping in the parks!"

A world, in short, you wouldn't want your children to come across. . . . Thus was Goya obscene in depicting the Disasters of War, thus Whitman an exhibitionist, exhibiting man in his own strange skin.

On May 29 Customs released the books it had been holding, since the United States Attorney at San Francisco refused to institute condemnation proceedings against *HOWL*.

Then the police took over and arrested us, Captain William Hanrahan of the juvenile department (well named, in this case) reporting that the books were not fit for children to read. Thus during the first week in June I found myself being booked and fingerprinted in San Francisco's Hall of Justice. The city jail occupies the upper floors of it, and a charming sight it is, a picturesque return to the early Middle Ages. And my enforced tour of it was a dandy way for the city officially to recognize the flowering of poetry in San Francisco. As one paper reported, "The Cops Don't Allow No Renaissance Here."

The ACLU posted bail. Our trial went on all summer, with a couple of weeks between each day in court. The prose-

cution soon admitted it had no case against either Shig Murao or myself as far as the *Miscellaneous Man* was concerned, since we were not the publisher of it, in which case there was no proof we knew what was inside the magazine when it was sold at our store. And, under the California Penal Code, the willful and lewd *intent* of the accused had to be established. Thus the trial was narrowed down to *HOWL*.

The so-called People's Case (I say so-called, since the People seemed mostly on our side) was presented by Deputy District Attorney Ralph McIntosh whose heart seemed not in it nor his mind on it. He was opposed by some of the most formidable legal talent to be found, in the persons of Mr. Jake ("Never Plead Guilty") Ehrlich, Lawrence Speiser (former counsel for the ACLU), and Albert Bendich (present counsel for the ACLU)—all of whom defended us without expense to us.

The critical support for *HOWL* (or the protest against censorship on principle) was enormous. Here is some of what some said:

Henry Rago, editor of *Poetry* (Chicago)—

. . . I wish only to say that the book is a thoroughly serious work of literary art. . . . There is absolutely no question in my mind or in that of any poet or critic with whom I have discussed the book that it is a work of the legitimacy and validity contemplated by existing American law, as we know it in the statement of Justice Woolsey in the classic *Ulysses* case, and as we have seen it reaffirmed just recently by the Supreme Court in the Butler case. . . . I would be unworthy of the tradition of this magazine or simply of my place as a poet in the republic of letters . . . if I did not speak for the right of this book to free circulation, and against this affront not only to Allen Ginsberg and his publishers, but to the possibilities of the art of poetry in America. . . .

William Hogan of the San Francisco *Chronicle*:

. . . ***HOWL and Other Poems,*** according to accepted, serious contemporary American literary standards, is a dignified, sincere and admirable work of art. . . .

Robert Duncan and Director Ruth Witt-Diamant of the San Francisco (State College) Poetry Center:

. . . ***HOWL*** is a significant work in American poetry, deriving both a spirit and form from Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass,* from Jewish religious writings. . . . It is rhapsodic, highly idealistic and inspired in cause and purpose. Like other inspired poets, Ginsberg strives to include all of life, especially the elements of suffering and dismay from which the voice of desire rises. Only by misunderstanding might these tortured outcryings for sexual and spiritual understanding be taken as salacious. The poet gives us the most painful details; he moves us toward a statement of experience that is challenging and finally noble.

Thomas Parkinson (University of California):

. . . ***HOWL*** is one of the most important books of poetry published in the last ten years. Its power and eloquence are obvious, and the talent of Mr. Ginsberg is of the highest order. Even people who do not like the book are compelled to testify to its force and brilliance. . . .

James Laughlin (New Directions):

I have read the book carefully and do not myself consider it offensive to good taste, likely to lead youth astray, or be injurious to public morals. I feel, furthermore, that the book has considerable distinction as literature, being a powerful

and artistic expression of a meaningful philosophical attitude. . . .

Kenneth Patchen:

The issue here—as in every like case—is not the merit or lack of it of a book but of a Society which traditionally holds the human being to be by its very functional nature a creature of shameful, outrageous, and obscene habits. . . .

Eugene Burdick (novelist and critic):

The poem *HOWL* strikes me as an impressionistic, broadly gauged, almost surrealistic attempt to catch the movement, color, drama, and inevitable disappointments of life in a complex, modern society. *HOWL* is a pessimistic, and indeed, almost a tragic view of life. . . . It is my impression that the total impact of the poem is far from lascivious or obscene. It is depressing, but not licentious or extravagant in its use of harsh words. . . .

Northern California Booksellers Association:

It may or may not be literature but it does have literary merit. . . . The proposition that adult literature must meet the standards of suitability for children is manifestly absurd. . . . To quote Supreme Court Justice Frankfurter in a similar case— ". . . the effect of this is to reduce the adult population to reading only what is fit for children . . . surely this is to burn the house down to roast the pig."

Barney Rosset and Donald Allen, editors of the *Evergreen Review* (in which *HOWL* was reprinted during the trial):

The second issue of *Evergreen Review,* which was devoted to the work of writers in the San Francisco Bay Area, at-

tempted in large part to show the kinds of serious writing being done by the postwar generation. We published Allen Ginsberg's poem *HOWL* in that issue because we believe that it is a significant modern poem, and that Allen Ginsberg's intention was to sincerely and honestly present a portion of his own experience of the life of his generation. . . . Our final considered opinion was that Allen Ginsberg's *HOWL* is an achieved poem and that it deserves to be considered as such. . . .

At the trial itself, nine expert witnesses testified in behalf of *HOWL*. They were eloquent witnesses, together furnishing as good a one-sided critical survey of *HOWL* as could possibly be got up in any literary magazine. These witnesses were: Mark Schorer and Leo Lowenthal (of the University of California faculty), Walter Van Tilburg Clark, Herbert Blau, Arthur Foff, and Mark Linenthal (all of the San Francisco State College faculty), Kenneth Rexroth, Vincent McHugh (poet and novelist), and Luther Nichols (book editor of the San Francisco *Examiner*). A few excerpts from the trial transcript—

DR. MARK SCHORER: The theme of the poem is announced very clearly in the opening line, "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked." Then the following lines that make up the first part attempt to create the impression of a kind of nightmare world in which people representing "the best minds of my generation," in the author's view, are wandering like damned souls in hell. That is done through a kind of series of what one might call surrealistic images, a kind of state of hallucinations. Then in the second section the mood of the poem changes and it becomes an indictment of those elements in modern society that, in the author's view, are

destructive of the best qualities in human nature and of the best minds. Those elements are, I would say, predominantly materialism, conformity and mechanization leading toward war. And then the third part is a personal address to a friend, real or fictional, of the poet or of the person who is speaking in the poet's voice—those are not always the same thing—who is mad and in a madhouse, and is the specific representative of what the author regards as a general condition, and with that final statement the poem ends. . . .

MR. MCINTOSH (*later in cross-examination*): I didn't quite follow your explanation to page 21, "Footnote to *HOWL*." Do you call that the second phase?

MARK SCHORER: I didn't speak about "Footnote to *HOWL*." I regard that as a separate poem.

MR. MCINTOSH: Oh, I'm—

MARK SCHORER: It is not one of the three parts that make up the first poem. It's a comment on, I take it, the attitude expressed in *HOWL* proper, and I think what it says—if you would like my understanding of it—is that in spite of all of the depravity that *HOWL* has shown, all of the despair, all of the defeat, life is essentially holy and should be so lived. In other words, the footnote gives us this state in contradistinction to the state that the poem proper has tried to present.

MR. MCINTOSH (*later*): Did you read the one in the back called "America"? . . . What's the essence of that piece of poetry?

MARK SCHORER: I think that what the poem says is that the "I," the speaker, feels that he has given a piece of himself to America and has been given nothing in return, and the poem laments certain people who have suffered at the hands of—well, specifically, the United States Government, men like Tom Mooney, the Spanish Loyalists, Sacco & Vanzetti, the Scottsboro boys and so on.

MR. MCINTOSH: Is that in there?

MARK SCHORER: That's on page 33. In other words, that is the speaker associating himself with those figures in American history whom he regards as having been martyred. He feels that way about himself.

MR. MCINTOSH: Well, "America" is a little bit easier to understand than *HOWL*, isn't it? . . . Now [*referring to shorter poems in the back of the book*]—you read those two? You think they are similar, in a similar vein?

MARK SCHORER: They are very different. Those are what one would call lyric poems and the earlier ones are hortatory poems.

MR. MCINTOSH: What?

MARK SCHORER: Poems of diatribe and indictment, the mood is very different, hortatory.

MR. MCINTOSH: That's all.

DR. LEO LOWENTHAL: In my opinion this is a genuine work of literature, which is very characteristic for a period of unrest and tension such as the one we have been living through the last decade. I was reminded by reading *HOWL* of many other literary works as they have been written after times of great upheavals, particularly after World War One, and I found this work very much in line with similar literary works. With regard to the specific merits of the poem *HOWL*, I would say that it is structured very well. As I see it, it consists of three parts, the first of which is the craving of the poet for self-identification, where he roams all over the field and tries to find allies in similar search for self-identification. He then indicts, in the second part, the villain, so to say, which does not permit him to find it, the Moloch of society, of the world as it is today. And in the third part he indicates the potentiality of fulfillment by friendship and love, although it ends on a sad and melancholic note actually indicating that he is in search for fulfillment he cannot find.

KENNETH REXROTH: . . . The simplest term for such writing is prophetic, it is easier to call it that than anything else because we have a large body of prophetic writing to refer to. There are the prophets of the Bible, which it greatly resembles in purpose and in language and in subject matter. . . . The theme is the denunciation of evil and a pointing out of the way out, so to speak. That is prophetic literature. "Woe! Woe! Woe! The City of Jerusalem! The Syrian is about to come down or has already and you are to do such and such a thing and you must repent and do thus and so." And *HOWL*, the four parts of the poem—that is including the "Footnote to *HOWL*" as one additional part —do this very specifically. They take up these various specifics seriatim, one after the other. . . . And "Footnote to *HOWL*," of course, again, is Biblical in reference. The reference is to the Benedicite, which says over and over again, "Blessed is the fire, Blessed is the light, Blessed are the trees, and Blessed is this and Blessed is that," and he is saying, "Everything that is human is Holy to me," and that the possibility of salvation in this terrible situation which he reveals is through love and through the love of everything Holy in man. So that, I would say, that this just about covers the field of typically prophetic poetry. . . .

HERBERT BLAU: The thing that strikes me most forcefully about *HOWL* is that it is worded in what appears to be a contemporary tradition, one that did not cause me any particular consternation in reading, a tradition most evident in the modern period following the First World War, a tradition that resembles European literary tradition and is defined as "Dada," a kind of art of furious negation. By the intensity of its negation it seems to be both resurrective in quality and ultimately a sort of paean of possible hope. I wouldn't say that the chances for redemption or chances for salvation in a work of this kind are deemed to be very extensively possible but, nonetheless, the vision is not a

total vision of despair. It is a vision that by the salvation of despair, by the salvation of what would appear to be perversity, by the salvation of what would appear to be obscene, by the salvation of what would appear to be illicit, is ultimately a kind of redemption of the illicit, the obscene, the disillusioned and the despairing. . . .

VINCENT MCHUGH: In this case . . . we have a vision of a modern hell. Now, we have certain precedents for that, for example, the book that it makes me think of, or the work of literature that it makes me think of offhand, the work of literature which is ferociously sincere in the same way, is Mr. Pound's—some of Mr. Pound's *Cantos,* especially Canto XIV and Canto XV. These, for example, in turn derive certainly from Dante and from the famous so-called cantos in Dante, and Dante, in turn, derives from the *Odyssey,* and so on into all the mythologies of the world. . . .

The prosecution put only two "expert witnesses" on the stand—both very lame samples of academia—one from the Catholic University of San Francisco and one a private elocution teacher, a beautiful woman, who said, "You feel like you are going through the gutter when you have to read that stuff. I didn't linger on it too long, I assure you." The University of San Francisco instructor said: "The literary value of this poem is negligible. . . . This poem is apparently dedicated to a long-dead movement, Dadaism, and some late followers of Dadaism. And, therefore, the opportunity is long past for any significant literary contribution of this poem." The critically devastating things the prosecution's witnesses could have said, but didn't, remain one of the great Catholic silences of the day.

So much for the literary criticism inspired by the trial. Cross-examination by the Prosecutor was generally brilliant, as in the following bit:

MR. MCINTOSH: Does Mr. Ferlinghetti attend your poetry writing workshop?

DR. MARK LINENTHAL: He does not.

MR. MCINTOSH: Do you attend his?

DR. LINENTHAL: I do not.

MR. MCINTOSH: You haven't been over there hearing him read poetry?

DR. LINENTHAL: No, I haven't.

(etc.)

Legally, a layman could see that an important principle was certainly in the line drawn between "hard core pornography" and writing judged to be "social speech." But more important still was the court's acceptance of the principle that if a work is determined to be "social speech" the question of obscenity may not even be raised. Or, in the words of Counsel Bendich's argument:

"The first amendment to the Constitution of the United States protecting the fundamental freedoms of speech and press prohibits the suppression of literature by the application of obscenity formulae unless the trial court first determines that the literature in question is utterly without social importance." (*Roth* v. *U.S.*)

. . . What is being urged here is that the majority opinion in *Roth* requires a trial court to make the constitutional determination; to decide in the first instance whether a work is utterly without redeeming social importance, *before* it permits the test of obscenity to be applied. . . .

. . . The record is clear that all of the experts for the defense identified the main theme of *HOWL* as social criticism. And the prosecution concedes that it does not understand the work, much less what its dominant theme is.

Judge Horn agreed, in his opinion: "I do not believe that *HOWL* is without even 'the slightest redeeming social im-

portance.' The first part of *HOWL* presents a picture of a nightmare world; the second part is an indictment of those elements in modern society destructive of the best qualities of human nature; such elements are predominantly identified as materialism, conformity, and mechanization leading toward war. The third part presents a picture of an individual who is a specific representation of what the author conceives as a general condition. . . . 'Footnote to *HOWL*' seems to be a declamation that everything in the world is holy, including parts of the body by name. It ends in a plea for holy living. . . ."

And the judge went on to set forth certain rules for the guidance of authorities in the future:

"1. If the material has the slightest redeeming social importance it is not obscene because it is protected by the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution, and the California Constitution.
2. If it does not have the slightest redeeming social importance it *may* be obscene.
3. The test of obscenity in California is that the material must have a tendency to deprave or corrupt readers by exciting lascivious thoughts or arousing lustful desire to the point that it presents a clear and present danger of inciting to anti-social or immoral action.
4. The book or material must be judged as a whole by its effect on the *average adult* in the community.
5. If the material is objectionable only because of coarse and vulgar language which is not erotic or aphrodisiac in character it is not obscene.
6. Scienter must be proved.
7. Book reviews may be received in evidence if properly authenticated.
8. Evidence of expert witnesses in the literary field is proper.
9. Comparison of the material with other similar material

previously adjudicated is proper.

10. The people owe a duty to themselves and to each other to preserve and protect their constitutional freedoms from any encroachment by government unless it appears that the allowable limits of such protection have been breached, and then to take only such action as will heal the breach.
11. Quoting Justice Douglas: 'I have the same confidence in the ability of our people to reject noxious literature as I have in their capacity to sort out the true from the false in theology, economics, politics, or any other field.'
12. In considering material claimed to be obscene it is well to remember the motto: *Honi soit qui mal y pense* (Evil to him who thinks evil)."

At which the Prosecution was reliably reported to have blushed.

Under banner headlines, the *Chronicle* reported that "the Judge's decision was hailed with applause and cheers from a packed audience that offered the most fantastic collection of beards, turtle-necked shirts and Italian hair-dos ever to grace the grimy precincts of the Hall of Justice." The decision was hailed editorially as a "landmark of law." Judge Horn has since been re-elected to office, which I like to think means that the People agree it was the police who here committed an obscene action.

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